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RE-USING A TOWN

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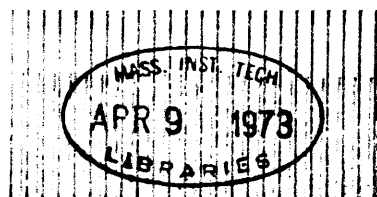
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RE-USING A TOWN

Preservation activities in the United States have done little to respond to the problem of those American towns in which a fairly homogeneous group of architecturally important buildings and places are attempting to coexist with contemporary urban and suburban growth, renewal, and decay. The project focuses on Ipswich, Massachusetts, planning to protect the form of the town center and to utilize structures which have outgrown their original function.

An analysis of the history of the town determines the influences that established the present form of the town. This is followed by a criticism of recent plans and legislation that consider the form and uses of the town center. A detailed study of a nineteenth century mill, currently a plant for Sylvania Electric, examines the possible uses for it and the impact of these uses on adjacent properties and the town center. Finally, historic district legislation and zoning are utilized to provide a means for the preservation and design control in the town center and adjoining land.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: RE-USING A TOWN, IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

This project grew from an interest in preservation in the U.S. and from a summer's work in a small town in Virginia recording historic American buildings for the national archives. In exploring the preservation movement and the buildings left from America's past, I find many different kinds of buildings, varying more and more by size and use as life became more specialized over the past 300 years of American social growth. Buildings have different orientation, access, lighting, and spaces as a result of the specialization. Preservation, as the current philosophy stands, has done little to respond to the diverse needs of these buildings. The result has been the common neglect of a large segment of American buildings, often typified by an inability to respond to regional differences in building types. To respond to the greater specialization of buildings, preservation has had to take more care in the particular uses and spaces of these structures. In preservation there grows a range of building concerns that treat not only historical differences and time differences, but also responds to a variety of kinds and shapes of spaces, access, size, as well as variation in importance to the community.

It seems that with so many aspects, the solutions become diverse and yet particular to each situation. To deal with the

inter-relation of the different kinds of buildings, I thought to explore an area having several different kinds of buildings, somewhat representative of the types and ranges. Perhaps one of the areas of greatest neglect of the American buildings exists in the towns of American that lie away from or separate from the urban centers of the country. Here many of the regionally typical buildings were erected and still stand, even if their original user has long since moved away. Here too, the cost of replacement is more gravely felt both by local merchants, land owners, and would-be developers, so that using what exists elicits as much positive response as does interest in tearing down. Further, those buildings not in use are a greater irritation by their visibility than similar buildings in a city. What to do with them or the land they occupy immediately comes to question.

A town has most of the problems of the city, but at a smaller scale: parking and circulation problems, how to use available space, and the questions of orientation of spaces and the uses of the town fabric. In dealing with its own problems and seldom looking for outside solutions from specialists, it more completely shows the interests of the town residents, the important leaders and issues. Being self-governing, it provides its own services and is interested in maintaining them. Because it feels it should control its environment, it is easier to gain a picture of the town than a neighborhood of a city or a section of a city. Exploration of preservation, conversion and planning activities becomes feasible.

Preservation efforts have seldom looked at a whole town without regarding the total town as capable of being preserved as an entity. In fact, until quite recently preservation concerned only famous American shrines and museums. At first the monuments were the homes of famous men or sites of famed events, such as Independence Hall. After the national centennial, both antique collecting and the collecting of antique homes became part of American life. With this came the preservation of old homes in which to put antiques. This kind of preservation began with little research into the exact methods of restoration or of the creation of the structure, and so established many misconceptions about what really once existed. But as time passed, scholastic interest increased until the field became fiercely academic in its approach. Out of this kind of research grew the Williamsburgs, Sturbridges, and Shelburne Villages.

Preservation has had a difficult time in getting out of the museum mold while still retaining interest in the historical importance of the structures. Even among the present day specialists the lethargy in removing the museum feeling has been extremely difficult. The usual result is to shift to a playful interpretation of the old building, creating a new and different world. A superb example of this is the Ghirendelli Square project in San Francisco which re-used an old chocolate factory. This approach grew in part from the interest in making old buildings profitable in the center city, in an effort to use a complex of buildings instead of isolated structures, and from observing that so much of urban building was threat-

ened with destruction because it could no longer fill the original needs. This kind of approach moved from looking principally at the monumental buildings to interest in all kinds of buildings, but it still emphasized that what was preserved or re-used would always be a special use and a special place in the city.

Taking a whole town expands the theory to all buildings: that buildings need not be precious, but that all different kinds of buildings can be used, re-used, converted or preserved. Further, because this concerns a whole town over its entire history, to look at what is and was there is to understand the growth and changes of the town form, uses, spaces, densities. Using the history of the town as basis for the planning of the town and as a reflection of the present attitudes, can also guide the re-using of the various buildings in the town. It should further explain why some areas are neglected while others continue to have interest to everyone in the town, while producing a wide range of opinions on the town as a whole which can stand as a basis for the re-examination.

Examination of the recent zoning legislations and other forms of planning implementation, such as the Comprehensive Plan of 1964 and the Problems and Opportunities Report of 1972, reveal the biases initiated from the development of the town's form. These prejudices are also expressed by the citizens in interview, giving an overall view of the town that today reflects the shifts in population, use, access and form occurring over three centuries.

The solutions presented by consultants (and often by the residents) tend also to follow this pattern. Generally, the manifestation is an interest in the use, particularly one specific use in an area, rather than an interest in the specific place and the general uses and demands of that area. This study will attempt to suggest means of both preservation and planning by interest in the nature of the places, the form and spaces of the town, regarding them through the town's history and recent planning and opinion.

This study concerns one place: Ipswich, Massachusetts. It specifically relates to the town center of that town. Ipswich is a town of the Boston metropolitan region in Essex County on the North Shore about 32 miles from Boston. It presently has a population close to 12,000. With a growth rate four times that of Boston and twice that of Essex County, the town has a probability of doubling its present population by 1990.

In the past fifteen years, the growth tendency has been toward a bedroom community with an increasing migratory population rather than one that continues in the town generation to generation. With good schools, adequate public services, fairly comparative taxes, and excellent recreation facilities, Ipswich desperately needs to understand what it will be in the future and to plan toward achieving that goal.

Specifically, the study shows that there are two major areas of concern and from these two points most of the rest of the town center's decision making can be logically generated.

First is a question of maintenance of scale throughout the town, regardless of land use. If a means of integrating new construction, rehabilitation, and the existing fabric can be found that also respects the established patterns that have been created over the years and also respond to present and future demands, then Ipswich can remain "an old New England town" and still fulfill all the needs of a modern residential community. This means of integration has yet to be met in the present legislation, town committees, or in the plans of developers or planners.

Secondly, the indefinite situation that results from the indefinite, unstable use of the Sylvania plant affects everything in a wide radius around those buildings. The site is the largest land parcel in the center of town. It is adjacent to both the railroad and the main traffic arteries of the town. It is close to all needs and services, close enough to the commercial area that commercial development could conceivably move in that direction instead of further development along Hammett Street or in highway strip zoning. While now being in an industrial zone, it could easily be converted to other uses. It occupies a prime site on the Ipswich River. Finally, it is visible from everywhere in town, therefore affecting the view from everywhere in town. Its demolition or change in any way will be reflected in the changes in town income from Sylvania, in the changes in traffic loads on streets, in the possible influx of outside users, and, if the buildings are altered or torn down, in a great change in the way Ipswich looks.

This town is old, founded in 1634, four years after the

founding of Massachusetts Bay. An important town in the colony from its beginning, it has experienced most of the changes a New England town has gone through from the 17th century to the present, yet it is still quite small, still quite separate from its neighboring towns, still with few recent alterations of the old fabric, and therefore particularly interesting to explore. Its citizenry shows great interest in the town, with many citizen organizations reflecting every attitude toward each issue important to the town.

This study looks at what is there, noting those architecturally and socially important buildings and spaces that exist. The past, present, and future of the town can be interconnected by an examination. Doing this adds a dimension of understanding of the town beyond an exploration of just what is there now. This added understanding can be included in the re-use of parts of the town. Re-use can say something about why the buildings are the way they are and how their use was derived, not just by preserving and changing uses, but it takes what exists and evolves a future from the past. Here, then, is a look at the past to the present.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE FORM OF IPSWICH

As the site of Agawam pointed out by William Woods in his history of New England and by John Smith in his exploration of the New England coast, the site of Ipswich was a likely settling spot before the Massachusetts Bay decided to settle a town there. In 1634 the colonial government sent John Winthrop, Jr., a member of one of the most prominent families of the colony, with twelve men to establish a colony, a town of Agawam. To recommend it, the site had a well-protected harbor on the Ipswich River with Plum Island to the Northeast and the marshes on the bay, providing good fishing and shell fishing. The site itself was a cluster of hills rising out of the salt marshes at the point where the river changed from tidal to fresh water. There were several falls there for future mills, as well as enough land to farm.

Built against the hill and facing south on an open space which runs steeply down to the river, the town site was mostly rocky with great stone outcroppings on the green. Backed up to a hill and with heavy marshes to the north, it was protected from Indian attacks. In earliest times, accessed by boats coming up the Ipswich River, the river focused as a center for the town with its wharfs in the tidal area and the many mills located at the upper and lower falls.

In the first deeding of land, lots were drawn and then assigned to the town members along several streets or ways and around the two greens. The roads ran along both sides of the river, near the bank. There was a road circling the hill on the north side of town and a road partially encircling the hill on the south side of town and then turning south toward Topsfield. On the southern side of the river a road led toward Beverly. Further, roads connected the road along the north hill and the river road; another road ran from the hill, by the meeting house and then past the mill south toward Topsfield.¹ All the roads followed the topography. Two central areas were laid out in this plan: one to the south for militia practice, later called the School House Green, and one between the hill, the mill and the river, the Meetinghouse Green or North Green. The latter defined a large area set into the rocky hillside and dominated by many large rock outcroppings. An earthwork probably topped by a palisade with blockhouse and arsenal surrounded the meetinghouse. Also on the green was a pound for impounding stray animals. Later there was also a gaol and jail keeper's house. The green was the center of town life, the site of punishment, worship, town meetings and gathering of social life and the disseminating point for ideas from abroad.

There was an inn on the green, an important center for the town. Here the quarterly courts met, travelers rested, and local men mixed ideas.

¹Thomas Franklin Waters, Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony: 1633-1700. Volume I, (Ipswich: The Ipswich Historical Society, 1905), pp. 317-481.

The town itself was laid out in housing lots and tillage lots. The housing lots had to be less than a half mile from the meetinghouse. They usually comprised 1-2 acres but never exceeded 6 acres. Many members of the town received more than one house lot in the town, yet by 1700 most of the lots had a house and barn and other dependencies. Many house lots are similar to the lots now existing in the town especially on the Greens, the Heights and the south side of the river. However, they tend to be deeper than today, leaving the inner part of many blocks for orchards and extra buildings. The smallest lots were on High Street, East Street, and Turkey Shore Road. It is curious to note that parts of the town are not too much more dense today than they were in 1700 when these lots had their first house.

Most of the residents built substantial homes right away so that by 1645-50 a clear feeling of a community with well established structure and forms had emerged. This responds to the Puritan belief that they were establishing a city of God, a paradise in the New World, not a refuge.

The tillage lots beyond the half mile radius were mostly farms of several hundred acres. Because the town was close to 50 square miles (it then included Hamilton, Essex and Linebrook), the farms could be quite far from the town center. The remaining land became common land, owned by the whole town for fishing stages, pastures, thatch, and timber. Included in the common lands were the beaches and marshes of the town.

The Meetinghouse Green held most of the public buildings.

Most important of these was the meeting house: one of the first buildings erected and, though not of substantial character, it was the center of the community. It seems to have had no peculiar characteristic or quality of space, no belfry, town clock or steeple. It was fortified (as was the second meeting-house) with a block house that also served as arsenal and some form of earth, stone and timber wall. Not until after 1700 did the earthworks around the building get sold with profits going to buy the town clock. At this time a more ornamental meeting-house, still not large, took over the site of its predecessor. 60 x 28 ft. stud, it had a belfry and the clock. The green was not an open plaza as seen today. Several people petitioned to build shops in the green, in addition to several houses which were there. In 1651, the county established a jail in Ipswich because Boston's gaol was too small and far away. This jail, a clapboard, three-story high building, 16 x 20 feet, stood east of the meetinghouse surrounded by an area for the stocks and whipping post, a jailkeeper house, and other out-buildings of the jail. The pound, as has been mentioned, was located on the green until the 19th century. Finally, at the beginning of the 18th century, the rock outcroppings began to be removed; but until then the green had a cluttered and random look about it similar to a medieval town square but without paving stones and with no strict geometric form or order of buildings.

As the town itself was in large part self-sufficient a first duty was the establishment of a mill. Richard Saltonstall was a very important and powerful man because he owned the mill;

he held the land and contract for all grinding for nearly a century. He built his mills (for he had at least 4) on the site of the present Sylvania factory next to the ford. When he sold the rights to the mills in 1729, recorded 2 grist mills, one fulling mill for the preparation of wool cloth, a saw mill and a dye house.

Shortly after Saltonstall's mill, a fulling mill was built at the lower falls, now County Street, bridge site. Wharfs soon appeared around the cove along Water Street and at the upper end of the Turkey Shore Road. Because Saltonstall's grist mill became insufficient to the needs, a tidal mill was frequently proposed at the foot of Summer Street, but it was never built because of the importance of the river for ships. Further, there were smiths, tan yards, soap making, a malt kiln and ship yards and ship building yards located along the river or creeks.

But there was no particular part of the river for industry. Industry located near a convenient site, close to the home of the man who ran it. Likewise, the commerce of the town grew from no particular market or area. The shops of the town were in the homes of the town, in any neighborhood.

The town and the colony built roads to interconnect the towns off the coasts and to get to the farms of the townfolk. There was some communication between towns in exchanges of ministers, the movement of the court, and visits to the many sons, daughters, and relatives in the different towns throughout the colony. Initially the river had several fords, the most impor-

tant near the present Sylvania site. Today there is access to the river at the point of the old ford where South Main bends across from the park. Also there was a foot bridge where the county road now runs. In 1645 a cart bridge was built on the site of the present Choate Bridge, and there has been a bridge there ever since.

The town has always had at least two inns, or taverns. Always the town gave a license to sell in one's home, with licensing changing every few years. Many taverns were on High Street, but almost always there was one on the green. At this the courts met. Others were scattered through the town.

Before the construction of the Choat Bridge there was no road where South Main Street is now. Access from the north side to the south was by the ford near the upper mill falls or by the footbridge at the foot of County Street. With the opening of the way to the new cart bridge, the land between the road and the river, the present South Main Street commercial area, was divided into 18-35 foot lots. While not immediately developed in such small parcels, nonetheless, the small size and narrow lots continued to influence what later was built there. This area always had a few shops, as well as residences. Across the street continued the larger parcels of the original land division, and on that side of the street the residences were more substantial with separate shops, if indeed there was a shop.

The beginning of the 18th century found the members of the town on the south side of the river interested in establishing

a church for their greater convenience. Also, The Great Awakening, then occurring throughout New England, stirred great interest in that segment of the parish. With the establishment of the south Parish on the south green, the green gained a greater sense of purpose and continuity. The meetinghouse was set out into the green at one end, separate from any buildings at that end of the green. It was not large, only 40 x 60, and was not imposing, without steeple or clock. The green had a store and a school house which was established there in the mid-17th century. The burying ground formed the south end before the land sloped away to a creek.

The north green retained much of its medieval character into the 19th century. Still dominated by its rocky terrain, the jail, the pound, the houses and shops continued to fill much of the green space. In 1717 an alms house was constructed next to the jail. The 18th century meetinghouse and the Town House differed from the more medieval buildings on the green. The new church, built in 1749, though small (47 x 63 x 26 stud) and close in size to the south parish, had an elaborate doorway facing broad side down the hill. An elegant gold weathercock topped the steeple on the north end of the building, and the town clock rang the hour. The steeple could be seen at a distance, being high and on a hill. Next to the church stood the town house where the courts sat. It was 32 x 28 x 18 stud, and it too had a belfry. On the lower floor was a school. Despite the architectural distinction of these two buildings, the town house was largely over shadowed by a rock ledge that rose to

the height of the eaves at one end. This and the other buildings cluttering the green must have dimmed significantly the impact of the two modern buildings. Surrounding all were homes and shops. The major inn of the town sat on the north side near the meetinghouse. The main road through Ipswich traversed both greens; at the south side the road met the south green at the beginning of the town, as the north green marked the north and west side of the town.

Ipswich was the major stop on the north-south Boston-Portsmouth stage, the overnight stop on the 2 day trip. For such purposes there always were several inns in addition to the taverns of the town, beside the one on the meetinghouse green. The others were on High Street west of the green or on the County Road near either end of the south green. Besides being on the main stage line, Ipswich was center of the county four times a year when the courts met in the Town House on the green.

The growing industry on the river, comprising principally fishing, shipbuilding and shipping, meant that the cove area and the area below tide had many wharfs. Above the tide, many mills continued and for all of the industry the river was a principle source of power. Cabinetmaking soon grew to prominence--the shops and work areas found in or behind the homes, mostly along High Street. High Street also was home to many tailors and hatters. There were several tanners along the river and shoe makers in the town. All through the 18th century there were few separate shops owing to the high cost of construction and heating and maintenance. Because the shops

were so small and the hours so long, the need for the shop to be part of the house was confirmed.

Ipswich was an important center of pillow lace in the 18th century. This was principally a women's industry, carried on in the home or in small buildings in the town, one on South Main Street and one at the end of North Main on High Street. It always was a cottage industry conducted in small, residential-like buildings.

A change in the scale of industry came to Ipswich in 1830 with the beginning of the cotton mills. This mill was at the upper falls on the site of the earliest grist mill (the present Sylvania site). By 1832 it employed 2 men and 43 women, had 3,000 spindles, 260 looms and wove 450,000 yards of cloth that year.² Over the years, it grew in size, switching to hosiery knitting in 1868. Ipswich had the first hosiery knitting machines, smuggled into the town from England. Originally this industry was in a house on South Main Street, but it grew and finally replaced the cotton yardage manufacturing in the mill across the river.

At the beginning of the 19th century Meetinghouse Green came closer to our present image of it. With the purchase of the land between the river and Green Street the county moved the alms house and the house of correction. The pound was removed to behind the inn. The large rock ledge that stood to the shoulder of the Town House roof was blasted out so that the

²Thomas Franklin Waters, The Ipswich River, Its Bridges, Wharfs, and Industry (Ipswich: The Ipswich Historical Society, 1923), p. 11.

green was dominated by only the meetinghouse and the Town House, set out in the green. In the 1820's the last shop, a tavern, left the ledge in front of the Unitarian Church, vacating the public land to only the two remaining public buildings. The space around them was defined by prominent houses and shops.

In 1803 the Beverly-Newburyport road was converted to a toll road, the Ipswich turnpike. The improvement of the road bed meant increased service to the inns. At this time several prominent men, among them Madison and Lafayette, passed through town to great parades and celebration. In the 1820's the Methodist Church built a new parish house. While previously the entire town was of the same religion, the new church was not the dominant church, so it could not be in a dominant site of town out in the common. It was built on the north side of High Street, one lot east from the place where a widened North Main Street butted into High Street. It seems odd that the church was not even on axis to North Main Street, when it was so close to being so. This was the first of several new churches in town, all of which located away from the points of prominence.

In 1830 the Newburyport turnpike between Boston and Newburyport bypassed Ipswich. A new kind of toll road, it cut straight from Boston to Newburyport, like a line on a map, completely disregarding the topography. Its construction signalled the end of Ipswich as the overnight stop on the stage. It removed much of the transient traffic in the town. It decreased the influence of Ipswich in the area and cut the constant flow of news and new ideas coming into town. In so doing, Ipswich

dwindled in importance in the county and in some ways, lost touch with the outside world.

Another great change in transportation in and out of town came with the opening of the Boston and Maine Railroad in 1833. While bringing people through Ipswich once again, it did so along a foreign route, along the river between the hills, and stopping at the other end of town from the old stage stop. The railroad avoided both of the greens, and the greens could not be seen from the railroad. The new center it created was opposite from the meetinghouse hill, making one look up to the green instead of surveying the river and industrial-mill area from up on the hill as before. The south green was not noticeable at all.

The depot became a new center to the arriving visitor; it slowly also represented the center of a growing industrial area of a new scale. The mill's continuing growth and increases in kinds of production was only a beginning as the industries that supported the other processes of textile and hosiery production came to Ipswich too. All these located near the depot and along the railroad.

With the growth of new processes and the increasing size of the mill came new labor--so the depot introduced a new breed to Ipswich, the immigrant. For the immigrant, the depot area, with its ethnic shops and large hotels and boarding houses for foreigners, represented more the center of the town than the old Yankee centers of the North and South Commons.

At the same time that the outside visitor saw Ipswich from

a new route by the railroad, the old stage route changed. First the South parish built its new meeting house on the edge of the green facing south, instead of the old site in the green. The temple front served as a facade in its position as the focus of the green, where the old meeting house had been a simple volume placed in the green and passed around by all the traffic through town. The Unitarians broke from the North parish, building another temple front building of one story on South Main Street close to the street. While having no green or a distinguished space, it was close to the town centers and on the main route. On the North Green, the 18th century meeting house burned. Its replacement, a tall, angular gothic wood structure, dominated the center and the height of the green hill. The Town House, where the courts had ceased to meet, was moved to a site near the depot where it was used as a commercial block until it burned. The removal of the Town House left the meetinghouse as the only building in the green. All the other buildings surrounded the green giving order to the periphery, important but secondary to the one focus, the church. On the edge of the green, the town built a new school, the Ipswich Feminine Seminary. Large, but simple in appearance, it was a major scholastic center for women in the country while Mary Lyons taught there. Also on the green, the Methodists erected their new church. It stood to one side facing onto the main part of the green, not down the hill, obviously secondary to the Congregational meeting house.

Other churches came to town with the immigrants. The

first was that of the English who mostly came to make lace and hosiery. The Episcopal church was in a residential area on County Street, not set off in an ethnic neighborhood site. So, too was the Catholic church on a hill, on the "immigrant" side of town. The later churches also had sites in the respective neighborhoods of their parishoners.

Throughout this time, commercial activities continued in part in the homes but increasingly in separate buildings. While often spaced throughout the town, they clustered along Market Street and South Main Street and around Lord's Square. These commercial buildings differed little in size from residences and were mixed in with the residences on the streets of town.

While the population of the town increased somewhat, the density of the town did not change markedly. Lots did not get subdivided. When a certain density was reached, it would then vary little from that. Expansion of the town occurred in different places in the town, but not particularly from the nucleus outward. Mostly growth was filling in a neighborhood, as along Central Street after the swamp was drained.

Central Street was the first important street built in town in many years. It connected Market Square with Lord's Square, avoiding the hill at the base of Meetinghouse Green so that the major traffice pattern changed away from the green, separating the green from all the important traffic of the town that had not already gone with the railroad.

While Central Street did not immediately become built up, the impact of the change reached Market Street and Market Square.

With the creek across the street contained and the swamp drained, more expansion of the Market Street shopping area occurred. This obviously led to the increase in importance of Market Square as the junction of the cross town traffic, the commercial traffic of Market Street, and the now-quieting presence of the old town green and the still important town institutions on it.

At this time the river was becoming more built up. Even though shipping and ship building had died, there were mills, warehouses, coal yards, and the old tanyards. The land fronting along Water Street had shanties for shucking clams. Even as late as 1900, there were few houses along the river, and it really supported only industry.

In the middle of the century, as the mill expanded its buildings and the stocking industry grew, immigrants came to reduce labor costs and others came as servants, as was the case with the English and the Irish. To a degree, these people integrated into the town, as noted by the Episcopal Church being on County Street. While the Irish Church built on the south side of the railroad later in the century, French Canadians came, working almost exclusively in the mills. They established their own church, lived near the mill, and had their own stores and community centers. They stayed in their own area separate from the town, maintaining the language difference and social separation.

This separation became reinforced with the arrival of Polish and Greeks later in the century and at the beginning of

the twentieth. They worked in the mills until the closing of the hosiery business in the 20's. Both of these groups also had their own neighborhoods and service stores, even staying separate from each other. The railroad and the industrial strip along the railroad became the main dividing line. The old citizens seldom mixed with the new, often expressing fear at the small, dark, and foreign whom they did not understand. Some people telling about that time say that virtually no one crossed the line created by the railroad. This fiercely separated the town socially as well as physically. This fiercely separated the town socially as well as physically. Today the separation remains strong and visible, though never pursued with the vehemence of the previous era.

The separation of the immigrants and the old town fortified Market Street as the tie between two areas and the common ground for the two areas, further emphasizing the old part of town and the meeting house as the locations of the old elements.

In the early 1900's a new form of transportation was introduced. It only fortified the east-west traffic route that was established with the opening of Central Street. The electric railroad came from Essex and Gloucester up County Street, cut across the south green, not taking the turn at a right angle but cutting across diagonally, and breaking that space. It moved through Market Square, down Central Street to Lord's Square and out High Street, west toward Rowley. It brought new people to town, allowing the town residents to cheaply leave town for Cape Anne and towns to the north, west and south. One

could go as far as Portsmouth quite cheaply on day outings. At the same time there was an increase in summer residents who came for the air and the beaches, building houses and buying old houses along Argilla Road, Castle Neck, Labor in Vain Road and the Jeffreys Neck area.

In the twentieth century the mills continued to increase in size after being bought by an out-of-town firm who brought in more foreign labor. They were many times their original size, overshadowing the whole like of the town both by their massive physical presence and by their social and financial interests in the life of the town. When the mill strike came in the 1900's, it shocked the town by the force with which it was suppressed. Ultimately, it signalled the movement of the mill south where unions were less powerful. The mills closed in the late 1920's yet the immigrants stayed, and the buildings were sold. Today a small number of people work in them as they remain as the last large reminder of the river-oriented industries which no longer needed the river at all.

Today an exploration of the town reveals an environment varied, yet in most respects homogeneous. Entering town by the Topsfield Road there is a mix of residential, commercial, and converted old buildings from the mill days. The scale varies between an older pedestrian scale and new gas stations, and bars with parking out front. There are several large pieces of vacant land, most notably the Sylvania parking lot and the railroad. This area, the lands behind, in the industrially zoned district, and along Washington and Hammett Streets are a hodge-

podge of uses, kinds of buildings, parking and empty space.

Particularly along Hammett and Washington Streets and in Brown Square the old industrial buildings have been converted to new uses, mostly as warehouses or as clam wholesalers and lumber yards, or they have been torn down. Some of the old mill and industrial tenements and boarding houses remain, of varying quality and varied use. Along a part of Hammett Street new buildings have been built with drive-in windows and parking in the front. The older commercial styles still exist along Market Street and South Main Street and Central Street, but they do not influence the changes on the other commercial areas. In fact, they find themselves just beginning to make the adjustment to a town where there is enough mobility that the residents will shop around for their needs instead of always going to the local store. This has slowly brought the local merchant to an interest in fixing up their stores and storefronts.

They have not yet seen the potential of the river which has always been the back yard and the sewer. It has only recently been replaced by a town sewer system while having lost most of its industry, coal yards, tan yards, and mills years ago. The only mill structures remaining, yet on the river, are those of the Ipswich Hosiery, now the Sylvania plant and Advance Transformer. These are on the site of the earliest mill of the town, Saltonstall's mill of 1634. They are yet in decent repair, of varying sizes and heights, fronting both on the street and sitting over the river. They are the last buildings directly relating to the river as their old use had demanded,

though that need and use has long since expired. The largest single piece of property in the center and also close to every amenity, by these facts it still is a most influential piece of property for the whole of the town.

Commercial expansion has occurred along Central Street and in Lord's Square, principally under the influence of the town's zoning legislation. These new stores and services have a greater direct automobile-influenced design, coming mostly from the parking requirements of zoning. The parking is in front with the buildings separate, not of bearing wall construction, set back deep in the lots. In Lord's Square, the entire square has been given over to gas stations, with the resultant loss of any form; the blacktop of the service area merges into the streets, compounding a lack of any significant buildings but for a few old residents.

Southwest from Central Street, the new development has followed much of the pattern of the old, with single and double family houses, and a few large apartment units.

Around the north green and High Street areas, an historic trust has purchased covenants for some of the oldest and best preserved houses, in an effort to preserve these homes while also, by the influence of these several houses' importance, to extend interest in the area so that other houses and the general feeling of the area may be continued.

On the North Green, the gothic church burned in 1966, leaving the site to a new church which sits closer to the ground and is more sprawling than its predecessors, particularly its immediate predecessor.

On the south green, the historical society moved the John Whipple House from its site near the mill. Here it is near the Society's Heard House and on the traffic route through town. Both are museums. Recently the South Parish has been rejoined to the North Parish, leaving the South Meetinghouse vacant. It is now used for a youth center while town residents decide whether this is an appropriate use for such a building.

While interest is high and hope strong that disintegration of this most treasured part of the old residential area from West High Street to Turkey Shore Road and South Green will not be eroded by development, small changes have taken their toll. The Episcopal Church has built a parking lot on County Street right on the road, the town has built another parking lot on Elm Street, there is an ugly, out-of-scale green nursing home on Green Street, a proposal suggested that the town increase parking by paving part of the Meetinghouse Green. For the most part, new development and construction fits well into the whole area and, with little land left for development, except at the edges, it is unlikely that offensive construction can occur to excess.

The town center has not grown appreciably in the past decade. Most of the town's rapid expansion has occurred in the areas beyond the center. It also has not lost many of its valued buildings; except for the North church, the other churches in town, most of the 17th, 18th and 19th century homes and the town hall still remain. The mill buildings still dominate the river front, the commercial area clings to the river, and the

shoulder-to-shoulder business blocks of Market and Central Streets remain , and there is always a store on the south green. The density of the town has remained consistent in each part of town since the 18th century.

CHAPTER III

LEGISLATION, PLANS AND OPINIONS OF THE FUTURE FORM OF IPSWICH

Since the late fifties Ipswich has been growing rapidly, if not in the town center, then in the entire town area with an impact on the town center. Boston has been pushing out, and the impact of suburban industrial development has reached Ipswich as well. Mostly the effect is an increase in resident population with its increasing demands for services, new developments and the auxiliary needs of new schools, better water and sewers, more and better maintenance.

Expansion has made demands on the existing town, mostly in the form of increased service from the old institutions: the school, library, parks, stores. While not directly affecting the old town fabric in a residential area, the affects are felt throughout the town. In expecting changes from the commercial area there must be changes in the edge between commercial and residential, but when the difference between the two is not always externally visible, as in the buildings that have served both as residence and business, the changes expected can make major alterations in the shapes of the town.

In Ipswich the building styles mostly are from a past age where detailing was expected and not prohibitively expensive, as it is today. The placement and form of the buildings responded to a pedestrian, rather than an automotive mobility.

Uses are stacked up on each other or set close to each other, but now the car takes as much room as the users or the space for use. These new demands on buildings and new building to meet such demand can be highly disruptive to the old order.

While not seeing change in just these ways, the residents of Ipswich recognized that times weren't what they used to be, and therefore decided to plan for the future, see what is to be expected and what could be done to let it happen gracefully. In 1957, Ipswich passed the zoning by-law to regulate land use in the town. In 1963-64 the town hired Metcalf and Eddy, engineers and planning consultants, to prepare a comprehensive plan. In 1965 the town attempted to pass an Historic District legislation. In the fall of 1972 Nash-Vigier, city planning consultants, began analysis toward a revision of the previous comprehensive plan.

In examining each of these documents, I will be principally concerned with the town center, not the more recent residential developments, except where such development affects the town center directly. This part of the study essentially concerns the impact of these documents on the town center, especially examining them from the perspective of the historical form of the town, and the feasibility for the continuation of that form, whether through the efforts of this legislation or by other means.

Zoning

In 1957 Ipswich passed a zoning by-law. The legislation has been modified since then, notably with the addition of a PCD district. Zoning is a form of police power enacted to protect areas from certain uses, to restrict lot size and placement and kind of buildings, and to protect unique qualities of a building, place or area. It is notable in being a general guideline, not directed to a specific structure or use.

The town center falls under several different zoning districts: Rural Residential and Agricultural, Old and Historic Colonial, Intown Residential, General Business, and Industrial. While all these designations somewhat follow the uses that existed in an area at the time of the passage, they are necessarily more selective in what will be permitted in the future. In most of the residential areas only largely residential activities can exist; no shops or businesses except those existing before the zoning legislation was passed, or a few exceptions such as office in the home, florists and nurseries, stables, and antique shops in the Historic Colonial district. While all the town center once supported industry and business mixed in with the residential, the size of businesses and, more particularly, the need for automobile access has determined that business must be in a set location occupies principally by other businesses and by the automobile.

The general business area is larger than it ever has been in the past, acknowledging the need for increased space: extending this dense area of town from South Main Street to Lord's

Square along Central Street, as well as the Market Street and Topsfield Road areas for shops and services. In this large area many of the present commercial buildings are from the turn of the century or before. Despite their somewhat run-down general appearances, they have a sense of coherency in the size of display and store windows, in the details of the facades and entrances, and in the consistency of buildings butting on the sidewalk edge along most of the shopping streets. However, none of this is controlled by the zoning ordinance. Zoning has no requirement of where the parking must be placed in relation to street or building, no building size limitation except height, no parking lot size limitation, and no means of breaking the mass of the building or other design-related controls. This zoning code allows for nearly 24 acres of large commercial development, like Zayre's, Bradlee's, etc. in the downtown area if the land parcels could be amassed. It could be all drive-in style shopping, varying set backs from the road, of any height to 35 feet. About the only limitations for this kind of use is in the sign designations for the area which restrict pole signs to 30 square feet and wall signs to 100 square feet.

While this kind of development hardly seems likely to move to Ipswich in the near future to replace the commercial establishments which are now located on Market Street in the town center, in the areas where commercial expansion will occur (along Hammett Street, Washington Street, Brown Square, and Central Street), this kind of random growth of large-scale buildings is not discouraged. Certainly, the existing build-

ings around the Brown Square area give no examples of what styles and kinds of buildings best suit that area. There is little resembling visual order there with a mix of residential buildings of all scales, wholesale and retail sales establishments of all scales, a lack of edge definition for the streets and properties, and no coherent parking patterns.

If this kind of form now existing in the general business area grows out to Central Street, as it has been doing along Topsfield Road, the order of these streets will be eroded. These streets, unlike Brown Square, are part of the main traffic system of the town, giving a coherent impression to the traveler who passes along them.

If, in expanding the commercial uses of these properties and those adjoining along Central Street and Topsfield Road, the same lack of planned and integrated use of the land continues, the commercial area of the town will necessarily grow more divorced from the patterns of both residential and commercial building that now exists on the North Green and along South Main and Market Streets.

The industrial area is zoned in the same manner as the commercial area. With a minimum building requirement and a height requirement, parking requirement and set backs, the industrial area is "hidden" from the general view along the railroad and not out in the open for all to see and use, as is the case with the General Business area. Nonetheless, a hedge of six feet in height cannot hide industrial buildings of great size (possibly 35 feet in height), surrounded by parking of

nearly comparable square footage as in building floor area, adjacent to residential dwellings having 80 foot frontage minimums.

With the strip of industrial and general business zoning along Central Street and the railroad tracks dividing the town residential area into a north and south side, the zoning does nothing to recognize any link between the two sides of the town. If the development of the entire area is extensive in the future years, there is no incentive to encourage development on the Topsfield side of the commercial area to resemble, conform to, or respond to either the commercial area or the residential area on the other side of the center, even though they once were the same kinds of areas.

Plate shows how the town center looks with buildings of the minimum lot size with the maximum building for that lot. In the commercial area all party wall construction was used to show how a wall of buildings can be built along so large a part of the main street frontages. However, this kind of construction can be modified to have many varying widths and depths of frontage with parking in front or behind, etc.

In the area known as the Old and Historic Colonial, the only buildings that can not be torn down are those whose deeds have a covenant purchased by the Historic Trust and the Historic Commission. All other buildings in the town can be modified in any manner. For a town which prides itself on the beauty of its "historic spaces" and the large number of 17th century houses, this says very little of any protective reaction potential.

Neither the zoning of the area which everyone regards as "historic" nor the zoning of that adjoining that property nor the properties that go together to make the image that conveys to the rest of the world "New England Village", are properly protected or controlled by zoning. The zoning does nothing for the precious landmarks. (Only a few of these are covered by covenant.) Zoning does not protect the areas around these landmarks, even though the landmarks would be near-dead relics without a context in which to be seen. Zoning can only control land use in the commercial areas that tie the main roads together, an area which gives much of the general impression of the town to the tourist. Zoning does not respect the similarity of scale that exists between the various parts of the town center, integrating the commercial and business, and residential and public. Zoning does not identify the river as anything more than a boundary line, like a road or a lot line.

While all kinds of uses can occur along the river and many even admirably use its amenities, giving no allowance for those amenities or for the town ownership and interest in the river will ultimately also permit the continuing neglect of the river and the advantages of siting along it.

In summation, the zoning by-laws of the town of Ipswich, while making an effort toward controlling the growth and densities of the town, do not take enough responsibility for the protection of the natural and man-built beauties of the town. Another means must be found to obtain that protection.

Metcalf & Eddy, Comprehensive Plan, 1963-64

In 1963-64, the engineering firm of Metcalf and Eddy of Boston wrote a master plan for the town of Ipswich. Called the Comprehensive Plan, 1963, this study's aims were

enhancing a more orderly, attractive, and efficient pattern of growth, protecting unique and irreplaceable historic and recreational resources, encouraging a more healthy economy and broadening the tax base, and providing better public facilities.³

After analyzing the population, economy, and land use for future growth patterns for the area, the final phase of the report was a proposed land use plan covering four policy areas:

1. revitalize and expand the town center
2. create new neighborhood on Linebrook Road
3. develop the hilly terrain for low density land uses
4. preserve a rural green belt.⁴

The first of these policies centers on my area of concern, and therefore I will examine only it very closely.

Expanded, the policy toward the town center reads:

Policy: Maintain and revitalize the Town center as a major focus for commercial, industrial, civic, cultural, and entertainment activities, and preserve and enhance the unique historical character of the area.⁵

To gain these ends they proposed (1) more off-street parking, (2) enlarging the site adjacent to the town hall for community services, (3) generally improving streets, parks, and community facilities, (4) encouraging a large industry and wholesale ac-

³ Metcalf & Eddy, Ipswich Comprehensive Plan, Ipswich, Massachusetts Proposed Land Use Plan, June 1963, p. 3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

tivity area, (5) make a historic trail with a small group of restored homes, (6) limit building density at the periphery of the town center area to set off this area as a separate, important place within the whole town.⁶

Ipswich does need more off-street parking. This study shows that even with what is considered a low-density proportion of parking space to floor sales space of 1:1, there is not enough parking. And there is space for that parking, both through the combining and re-organizing of the land behind the Market Street stores on the west side of the street, and through construction of town parking in relation to expansion and new construction of shops in the Washington Street, Hammett Street area or in the eventual conversion of the Sylvania buildings to commercial use.

In examining the parks in the town center, Metcalf and Eddy did not specifically look at the potential of the river as a focus for the parks or at the vacant lands along the river as potential park sites. They did, however, note that the commercial area had no link to the river, despite it passing right through the town center. Their further suggestions as to better town facilities, improved curbing and paving, are important to the visual image of the town.

They noted the need for better community facilities, an enlarged library, and most particularly a new town hall. In recommending a new town hall, they did not consider improving the existing structure or locating some of the town offices in other town buildings. At the present time, the space in the

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

old town hall is very poorly used. While renovation often is not cheaper than new construction, what will be built to replace the new town hall cannot have the "charm" that the Unitarian Church cum town hall has. The two facts must be fully examined and weighed.

The Metcalf & Eddy study was deeply concerned with raising the tax income. Large scale industry and wholesaling activity in the town center may be one form of industry that the town can attract, but it must also be noted that the present site for industrial uses is in a heavily congested area, not good for large-scale truck delivering. Because at present part of that industrially zoned area is being developed for housing, there is no large parcel of undeveloped industrial land. When noting that lands along the river are best suited for a broader human use than industrial site, the possible sites further decrease. A heavy concentration of industry, especially large-scale industry running through the center of town, cuts off one side of the town from the other. This separation would be spatial (by introducing large buildings), as well as physical (by permitting few means of passage across the district except Topfield Road).

Finally, the one point that shows the study's interest in "the unique historical character of the area" calls for a small area set aside on Elm Street, behind the present town hall for a cluster of restored houses as examples of what Ipswich now has in 17th and 18th century homes. In doing this, these

houses would be removed from their now appropriate and indigenous locations in the town and placed in a compound, as museums, or residences for people to look at, as well as, perhaps, to use. Or, they will be taken from areas that have so changed that residential use in that place is questionable. While finding places to move threatened buildings is a good intent, this idea ignores the fact that all of the town center of Ipswich, except for an area around the depot and Hammett Street and Market Street, is well-suited for such residential use. Establishing a mall has no relation to the way these buildings have been sited or used. They have always been on small town lots with many close adjacent buildings. This site is poor, being already heavily used. A mall suggests, but can only parody a green, and Ipswich, with 2 well-sited, preserved and varied greens, does not need another.

It is difficult to recognize the significance of an ordinary residence of the 17th century, or even to recognize the importance of an elegant home of that period without having a context of a compatible scale and spaces. Ipswich now has that feeling that makes the ordinary residences and the elegant residences of those eras act like residence, even where mixed with commercial building and contemporary houses. The town center, where those houses are, is not now threatened, nor does it need be threatened. But, what is important is that the town center is the retention of the recognizable whole of the old town. Metcalf and Eddy do not go so far as to notice that most of what exists in this coherent town center is important and

vital to the existence of the "unique historical character" for which Ipswich is noted. Because Ipswich is not projected to grow far beyond 20,000, the general layout of the town need not change. There is enough space for commercial, residential and service expansion to meet the needs of Ipswich residents. Projects like the Ipswich historical mall happen where old buildings are too inefficient to the needs and demands of the area where they are and the site must be cleared for another use.

Proposed Ipswich Historic District Act, 1965

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts established the Historic Districts Act in 1960; not until 1965 did Ipswich act under the power of that law to try to establish an Historic District for the town. In that year, under the jurisdiction of the newly established Historical Commission of the Town of Ipswich, a proposal was drafted, but not passed by the legislature. The purpose of that proposal was

to promote the general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Ipswich through the preservation and protection of historic buildings, places or areas of historic interest; through the benefits resulting to the economy of the Town of Ipswich in developing and maintaining its vacation-travel industry through the protection and promotion of these historic associations.⁷

The area covered by the district, as proposed, is shown on the accompanying map. In setting up such a district, the Historical Commission had power to approve all "erections, reconstructions, alterations, restorations, removals, or demolitions of buildings or structures within the historic District."⁸ This pertained only to exterior features, visible from a street or public way. In exercising this power, the Commission was reminded to consider such things as "the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of a building in question."⁹ Finally, the Commission was to be appointed by the Selectmen of

⁷Proposed Ipswich Historic District Act, Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1965, Section 1.

⁸Ibid., Section 5(a).

⁹Ibid., Section 8(b).

the Town of Ipswich, consisting of five regular members and two alternates.

In general, this act follows that set up by the general court in 1960 and the other historic district legislations passed by towns and cities throughout the U.S. However, it has some major difference to other legislation of this kind, and for Ipswich, it does not solve the problem of preservation or address itself to the real trouble spots that such legislation can protect.

First, the Historic Districts Act of 1960 says that the act promotes the general welfare, etc. through development of appropriate settings for such buildings, places, settings, and districts.¹⁰ In the Ipswich Historic District several of the most important places are ignored, while the general fabric and the District lines in two places do not concur. Lord's Square has always been an important center for the town, as the junction of several of the main roads, more particularly the old main road, High Street, and the newer Central Street; as well as the Square having always been a commercial center. Yet, the District does not respect the shape of the Square, but ignores over a half of the modern conveniences from its jurisdiction, or to attempt to exclude them from a town; it does hope to give a power over such sites, making new construction most fitting as possible to the older fabric. If the land around Lord's Square were included in the District, then there could be de-

¹⁰Historic District Act (1960), General Court of Massachusetts, Chapter 40C, Section 1.

sign control to help integrate new construction or modification or remodeling to better fit the idea of Lord's Square as a site of commerce, as the site of several important houses, and as an old center for the west end of town.

At the junction of Market Street and North Main Street a similar situation exists: the District ends at the intersection, but the preservation of the architectural integrity of the North Green ultimately is dependent on the kind of building on Market Street. The dependence, once again, is not in the actual importance of the Market Street buildings, but rather that in scale and relationship to the street. The Historic Districts Act, enacted to set up historic districts in the state, recommends that adjacent and dependent properties and buildings must be considered in the selection of Historic Districts and that the integrity of the entire area must be involved in judging new construction or alterations in historic districts.

In two other places, not quite so vital to the preservation of places in Ipswich, the Historic District boundary skips: on Turkey Shore Road and on East Street and Jefferey's Neck Road. On Turkey Shore Road a third of the houses are not included, suggesting that the District really should include only the two First Period houses. At the Jefferey's Neck intersection two thirds of the intersection is ignored, yet this intersection is important as the entrance to town from the northeast. Edges are always difficult to determine in laying out any kind of an area; in this kind of partitioning the edges are particu-

larly important. When an area extends into a place -- a major intersection -- the place will almost always affect the neighboring buildings and area; therefore, inclusion of the place, the larger intersection, protects the area, if not actually making that place the introduction to the general feel of the district.

In the wording of the act, the breadth of coverage and implication was curtailed. Ipswich's purpose is to preserve but also "to benefit the vacation-travel industry."¹¹ It does not mention the educational and cultural interests of the commonwealth and nation, which is a part of the Historic District Act passed by the legislature. And it does not act to develop appropriate settings for the buildings, place and districts, as does the enabling legislation. The exclusion of these or similar terms inhibits the scope of the legislation from protecting the environment that exists in Ipswich, which is equally as important as the group of ancient houses.

In its general layout the Ipswich Historic District chose a conservative layout of the area and worded the proposal in like manner. The net effect is to make the restrictions of the area appear more restrictive than a more general writing could have been. In the case of Ipswich a more all-encompassing writing of the legislation, as well as a broader designation of the district can more fully benefit the town center. Indeed, I believe that a carefully written Historic District Act can be the

¹¹Proposed Ipswich Historic District Act, Section 1.

main tool in protecting the whole town center and directing the future development of that entire area. This will be more fully detailed in the concluding chapter.

Nash-Vigier, Problems and Opportunities Report, 1972

In 1972 the planning board and town of Ipswich engaged the planning firm of Nash-Vigier of Cambridge, Massachusetts to update the old masterplan of 1963-64. As an initial step toward that end, Nash-Vigier examined major issues of the town set down by the Planning Board, by a citizen's Planning Advisory Board, and by Nash-Vigier themselves. This has, to date, consisted of a questionnaire mailed to all residents of Ipswich, and an analysis of that questionnaire as well as collection of information pertinent to understanding of the questionnaire answers.

In Nash-Vigier's Problems & Opportunities Report, the stated purpose is to outline and clarify the development and planning issues with which Ipswich must deal.¹² The bases for their attitude survey were (1) residential development, (2) environment, (3) economic base and town finances, (4) town center, (5) public services and facilities.¹³ For most of the issues presented, the town residents hopes that the town would not grow rapidly, would remain a manly residential and rural area with a locally important town center and locally used natural site.

The section of this study most pertinent to this study is Part 4 - Town Center. Noting first that the center is regarded as an entity presumes that it is somewhat separate and definable as to its character, scale, density and/or use. Then,

¹²Nash-Vigier, Ipswich-Problems and Opportunities Report, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, p. 1.

¹³Ibid.

however, the center is seen mostly as the commercial/industrial down town. The major problems noted are traffic, parking, a lack of a full range of consumer items, the question of increased and larger-scale retail development. The residents were not interested in a new town hall, new library, or a new town meeting hall. They did want this center to be the only center of the town, consisting principally of small shops.¹⁴

In summary, Nash-Vigier suggested a future exploration of a solution to parking, circulation, and land use and a design for the center. While there is a suggestion that the town center includes more than the commercial center, and, in fact, that the really treasured quality of that town center is not the commercial area but the North and South Greens, Nash-Vigier hardly mentions a relationship existing between the commercial and the old residential area surrounding it. The greens and town hill "provide attractive green background."¹⁵ However, though the interdependence of the two uses is acknowledged, there is no suggestion of a closer tie. This implies that a design plan for the center which they suggest will exclude full consideration of the residential areas on either side of the industrial-commercial strip through the center of town.

Nash-Vigier also does not address itself to examining the potential uses of the Sylvania site. Most certainly this will be included in the land use and design plan of the center.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 23.

Any study addressed to the solution of problems of the town center must resolve the problems of careful integration of uses and the maintenance of scale throughout the town center.

Survey of Opinions of Leaders of Organizations, 1972

To bring the history of the town center up to the present date, and to clarify just how the town residents regard where they live, I conducted interviews with the leaders or members of most of the town organizations. This information further acted as a guide toward the final direction of this paper and as a comparison to the information gathered in the Nash-Vigier opinion analysis, Opportunities and Problems Report. Much of what I found corroborated the findings of Nash-Vigier.

In questioning the residents I was most interested in the nature of the organization, its aims and successes, and how it fit the needs of the town. Finally, I asked who were the important people and organizations, what kind of town Ipswich will be in the future, and what problems lay in the way of this goal.

Most of the important issues of the town are represented by some form of organization. Besides the town committees concerned with administering town funds and meeting town needs, groups are involved in the town history and preservation of old homes, the preservation of the natural environment of the area, increasing the commercial development, and a concerned tax payer group.

Most of the people interviewed see Ipswich as increasingly becoming a bedroom community to the surrounding towns and industrial areas. They want the town to be essentially rural, staying much as it is today, with some carefully planned single family developments, a few apartments--most of the garden

variety, and no apartments of a distinctly urban nature. These last are not too specifically defined, except to indicate no high-rise. City people cannot really like or appreciate Ipswich, they feel.

Most people expressed interest in solving present problems before getting into the new problems created by more town expansion. Yet the means of solving the present problems did not come absolutely clearly upon questioning, indicating that either the expertise or the means or the problems themselves were as yet unclear. Determinable factors like extension of the sewers, better sewage treatment, and flood plain zoning could at least be enumerated as needed, whether or not the funds to implement action could be immediately forthcoming; but, to questions of quality and interest, the answers were uncertain. Spending money on something not absolutely necessary could not always be approved: underground wiring, a park, improving the river frontage, acquiring land for municipal parking. For most problems there was a distinct feeling that somehow a good solution would muddle through that would cost very little.

In particular, people could not relate well to situations that had not already been introduced as "problems." Most people, in being questioned about the Sylvania site, said only that the decision seemed to be in Sylvania's hands. They answered indicating the question had not really been considered before, and their answer was that the problem would not occur until Sylvania decided to do something. In light of the impor-

tance of the Sylvania site to the planning and use of the river, the commercial area, and the general appearance of the town center, this response is indicative of the avoidance of problems, or of disinterest in observing the environment and its possible changes.

In questioning about the town center, the people interviewed did not think the area very attractive, nor that it did its best in drawing customers, but their solutions pointed out paint and some fixing-up, a lack of parking space, or the fact that all commercial businesses would eventually move out of the town center. (Again, no idea what would happen to the buildings or land.)

The importance of the organization changes greatly with the enthusiasm and energies of the leader of that group. Some committees and organizations have all but died for several years, only to again become vital to the town. Then, organizations arise in response to a specific issue, as the Concerned Citizens responded to the creation of a planned community development in the town. In large part, the town organizations, leaders, and residents find that they act in response to non-resident interests wishing to affect Ipswich. Those leaders and organizations most respected or credited with having the greatest affect on the town are those who not only respond to outside interference on the town but who also initiate activities in the town.

In respect to who leads the organizations and who acts in the towns behalf, most people I talked to had moved to Ipswich in the past fifteen or less years. In general, those moving

into town in those years also joined the organizations, created new organizations, and generally were more active in town politics than the older permanent town residents. However, these people regarded the opinions and influence of the "old guard" as vital in most important town decisions. The Polish, the Greek, the French Canadian, and the Yankee element always have mention as the swing votes in crucial elections, most people regarding these groups as near-bloc voters at such times. In fact, an important Polish member of the community emphasized that the Polish are very jealous of each other's successes and therefore, seldom support each other in an election or join together as a bloc to vote. So this belief that bloc voting is important in formation of town action may have little actual credence.

While being interested in the planning, in getting new industries to come to town, in preserving houses, or the activities of each separate group, there is no organization that actively works across all the areas of concern to elicit new ideas or action. Everyone expressed hope that real leaders and innovators would come along. Everyone pointed at a different group --the selectmen, the planning board, the manager, etc., and asked why these people did not generate new solutions. Everyone concurred that there is a lack of real leaders. Those most often cited as the most important organizations are those that have created their own programs as well as responding to the immediate needs. The Historical Society and Historic Commission and the Conservation Commission are the more respected groups.

But any active participation that seeks a real change in Ipswich will face a very vocal and critical audience. While finally being noted as important, these groups also come under negative criticism, which, in the long run, must mean that they also must have full commitment of their membership and that they do perservere, often successfully.

CHAPTER IV
PROPOSALS AND DIRECTIONS

Ipswich, despite a growth rate four times that of Boston and twice that of Essex County in the past decade, has remained until now almost unassaulted by suburban expansion in its town center. The effects are being felt increasingly, however, as small inroads occur by demands for greater services and the pinch for more parking space, better access, and traffic controls. Slowly pressures build for more changes. Yet the pressure is faced cautiously because, though it must come, to the citizens it also appears irreversible and threatening to the existing quality of the town. Several people interviewed expressed a feeling of being overwhelmed in their positions as leaders: too many decisions were being demanded while they lacked the expertise to respond or even to recognize a coming problem before it became an issue.

In responding to the architectural environment of the town, this study points out three directions for consideration and action by the town. First, recognize areas for direct change. These places best accomodate new uses or new scale and form in the town center. Secondly, respond to preserve existing structures and places of particular historic and architectural importance to the town. Finally, make possible a situation to control the design of buildings and space in the town to permit change and renewal of the overall town fabric while maintaining the homogeneity of the town.

The predicted population of Ipswich in twenty years is between 20,000-30,000 people. Even with providing services for most of these people in the town center, that area need not change radically to fit the future demands. The importance of the whole town center suggests that most of it be the object of intense preservation activity and design control.

The historical survey points out important places in the town that are changing or will change. Local leaders often expressed indifference or confusion about these areas, not being certain about their future form, but also being unsure how to direct the future. The whole river frontage needs deeper consideration and commitment from the town to preserve the area and adapt uses to better respond to the benefits of the river. The river frontage has been the subject of a recent study for the Conservation Commission by Harvard School of Landscape Architecture. The Sylvania site is the largest single parcel in the town. Sitting right on the river, it is adjacent to the commercial area, a part of the industrial area, close to the more picturesque part of town. Also, its future is under question by its owners. The whole area near the mill is in a state of flux, partially due to the mill. With the drop off in railroad use, the depot area has ceased to be a focus. The death of the industries dependent on the hosiery business has left the area behind Market Street, and along Washington Street open to a variety of mixed, often unrelated uses.

Because the Sylvania plant is the largest parcel of land and is also so central to both areas of change, as well as ad-

jacent to the most treasured places in Ipswich, a more thorough consideration of many options for the Sylvania plant site particularly points out the tight interconnection of the commercial, the river and the residential. Looking intently at this one area is more than an example of what needs to be considered in the case of each other part of town, for the changes that occur here will affect all decisions in other areas. Looking at several options provides a broader perspective for viewing the impact of this site and those properties adjacent to it.

In a closer examination of the Sylvania site its very size is its most salient feature. It covers 3.9 acres in the center of town with buildings from one to four stories in height. When most of the town buildings are two to three stories in height and twenty to fifty feet in width and principally residential in scale, the mill buildings, each about 100 feet long, score a contrast in the town. The overall river frontage is 700 feet. Located not only on but over and in the river, it and its predecessors have molded the river and the river frontage since the first mills of 1634. In fact, the property carries in its title the use and control of the river water and river bottom. Further, it is the last surviving remnant of the extensive mill usage of the river in and near the town, a manufacturing form begun at the earliest times in the town.

The buildings are adjacent to both the commercial area of the town and the railroad. By a now-derelict foot bridge and visually, they are closely tied to the other side of the river and the South Main Street area. At the shortest distance just 50 feet of water separates the South Main Street side. Though

industrially zoned, the site abuts the commercially zoned area and lies next to a well-kept residential area which is also in the industrially zoned area.

The buildings are approached from Topsfield Road by Saltonstall Street or from Market Street by Union Street, both small streets in an already fairly congested area. The present site has a small parking area on the site and a much larger parking lot on Topsfield Road and Saltonstall Street. Together these lots can handle over 100 cars. The Topsfield Road site, however, being at the entrance to town on the main road and on the small crest of a hill, is better suited to more intense use than parking.

There are 9 buildings erected from the 1870's to the 1940's. They are brick with floor heights of nine feet or better, some lift access, but mostly stair access construction system is not known but presumed heavy post and beam. Sylvania Electric, the present owners, will not allow examination of the buildings or release drawings of the buildings; neither will they discuss their future plans for the buildings. However, they do not express great interest in the buildings as such, nor do they consider any re-use of the buildings. To Sylvania the buildings are presently necessary but ugly remnants of a past era.

The buildings and site are important to the revenue of the town of Ipswich as one of the few remaining industries. The site is assessed in 1972 at \$57,000 and the buildings at \$581,000, for a total assessment, with recent improvements, at \$638,790. The present assessment rate is 60% of real, so the site is close to \$1,000,000 in value.

While being important as a source of tax revenue in a town near devoid of industry, the Ipswich plant of Sylvania employs less than half of its scanty crew of 60-100 employees from the town of Ipswich, therefore not adding their buying power to town profits.

Principally because of the uncertain attitudes of Sylvania and the resource in land and buildings that the mill site provides, a thorough examination, opinion and list of possible alternatives for the site is needed by the town. Whatever happens to this site will have far-reaching impact on the whole town. Most of the current town center planning must respond to what the future uses of the mill will be.

Parking

In September of 1972 Sylvania presented a plan to members of the conservation commission of the town of Ipswich suggesting removal of three of the mill structures of the river frontage and conversion of the site to parking. Such action would retain part of the Sylvania operation or a similar operation, thus maintaining some of the tax base of the site, which currently is \$638,790 for the Estes-Union Street site. It would not appreciably affect the employment levels. Sylvania currently employs less than half its small work force from the town.

To the town's benefit, such a project would increase the town center parking by approximately 100 spaces. Metcalf-Eddy, in their 1963 Comprehensive Plan, suggest that the town increase land devoted to parking by three to five acres. This land allocation is far below that figure, but as there has been no new parking lot development since the study, a little parking may be better than none.

However, if one hundred spaces of parking are added to the Union Street/Saltonstall area, the congestion in that area will increase. This parking is not particularly close to the commercial area, especially if the commercial area expands along Washington Street, Hammett Street, and Brown Square -- the only areas of the central core where expansion can happen.

Paving so large an area, something equal to a football field in size, would have grave consequences for the river frontage. The buildings all along the river are small, 20-30

feet in frontage; they significantly define the character of the commercial area and tie it into and complement the residential parts of town. The mill, as it stands, while being far larger than any other building in the down town, is never perceived as one large building, and by the very variety of the different heights of the parts, the variation of the fenestration, and the ins and outs of the facades facing the river and Union-Estes Streets, it fits into the other scale of the town buildings. This project will remove 300 feet of the mill buildings and replace them with 300 feet of from one to four floors in parked cars. For lack of height, the parking lot would look its full 300 feet, something the present mill does not do. Being very close to the river, this site appears almost on the South Main Street side of the river. With the loss in height of the buildings to differentiate from the horizontal river, the parking will look like it is a part of South Main Street. The visual impact of the parking will be most apparent from the South Main Street side of the river.

South Main Street is the main through-town traffic artery. What is seen from it is key to an outsider's impression of the town. Further, a large parking lot is contrary to the aims of the river study which recognized the importance to the beauty and enjoyment of the town that could come from opening the river frontage to town recreational uses. The river is becoming one more th the town's amenities. The river no longer is the backyard or the sewer that it was in the previous century.

Park

Should all or part of the buildings be torn down, a possible use for the land is a new town part of 3.9 acres or less, depending on how extensive demolition is. Demolition along the river must involve reexamination of the link of the old buildings. It is not an interest of this study to judge the relative impact to the river ecology of either tearing down the mill buildings along the river and remaking the river front a natural state or demolishing the buildings to the ground floor level and filling in the foundations and walls, leaving alone the old mill substructure and its connection to the river. Making the site a park depends on the physical plan of the river edge. With each approach the park differs in use and in its relation to the river. In either case, making a park would help the drainage of the area by providing more absorbant land; it would reduce the summer heat in that part of town by removing a large heat retaining and reflecting surface.

The gross space change resulting from this being the open space in the more concentrated part of town would indeed be felt throughout the down town, and especially on all lands from which the mill is now visible. Most particularly, the new openness would change the land near the railroad and Topsfield Road where the houses are closer and most open space is consumed between industrial storage or parking. While offering more park lands to the Pole Alley and Topsfield Road residents, this proposal also ties together the park lands next to the town hall and behind the Whipple House along the river, bridging the river

itself at the dam and then continuing the park into the town center.

Tearing down the mill buildings removes one of the last marks of the earlier industrialized uses of the river. This site has always been the mill lands from the very earliest days of Agawam. Today the intensity of activity of the old mill-as-a-center-of-town lives on the adjacent commercial area, and the tight-packing of land use in this area. So large an allocation of land for a park in the downtown may be unnecessary especially with the great parklands adjacent to the down town center and in Ipswich. With useable commercial/industrial space at a premium in the down town, the proposal of park land for this mill site must be thoughtfully weighed.

Industry and Warehouse

The present use of the Sylvania plant closely parallels the demands on a future re-use as warehouse and small industrial site. The buildings are used by Sylvania for storage and production, and a part of the buildings are occupied by Advanced Transmission under lease from the Sylvania Company. Should the future use be for expansion industry and warehousing, the employment would probably be similar to the 60-100 currently using the buildings. At present about half of these are non-Ipswich residents. The assessed value would stay near the same and with the parking lot on Saltonstall Street and Topsfield Road, there certainly is sufficient parking to meet the needs of this use.

The Metcalf and Eddy comprehensive plan submitted in 1963 notes that Ipswich has no cheap available space for young and growing industries. They further state that much of the metropolitan Boston industrial development has grown from industry that first located in unused mills and other industrial spaces. With the accessibility of such space in the Sylvania buildings, there is a lure for business to come to Ipswich to utilize that space. Ipswich very definitely needs the kind of tax income that comes from industry. If, in 1973, new industries still look for such cheap industrial spaces as old mills, and if Ipswich wants to maintain the tax returns that Sylvania has given the town, then certainly continuing this site as industrial light industry and warehouse is a means to that end.

While the present use does not interfere with the river by dumping effluence or otherwise harming it, it also does not respond to the potential of the river site, nor does it even relate to the river as did the old mill, which used the river as a resource -- hence, the present siting of the buildings. It is used for manufacturing only because the buildings are adequate, and they exist where they do from irrelevant circumstances. In addition, the location, though zoned industrially, is not particularly well suited to industry, being surrounded by a well-kept, tightly built residential area. Though the two uses of residential and industrial grew up together, and though the light industry is not offensive to the homes, they presently do not relate to each other.

As for use as a warehouse, both access to the buildings and access to Ipswich is difficult. The town itself is not close enough to the major roads to be used as a terminal for frequently moved goods. The buildings on this site are closely packed, not affording easy loading and unloading except at one end where a loading dock now exists. Further, the floor levels vary adding further to the inconvenience of this use. Finally, though I could not gain access to the buildings to investigate, it is unlikely that the floor loading is adequate for the kinds of loads typical to warehousing.

Commercial and Offices

If the mill buildings were converted for commercial and office space, they would be very compatible with their surroundings of industry and commerce. The Metcalf & Eddy comprehensive plan of 1963 suggests an acre of new commercial development by 1980 to meet the prognosticated new population growth. That growth level is much less than what will occur with the PCD development. The increases in population with that and possible similar developments would make a greater demand on the down town shopping, even with local shopping establishments in the larger residential areas. The 100,000 square feet of available first floor space should go toward meeting such demands. Converting the upper stories of the mills to office space would give a new kind of office space to the town. At present the need for approximately 100,000 square feet of office space does not seem particularly apparent. The upper stories of the smaller down town shops that are used for office space are not fully occupied. However, this size and kind of space seems to respond more to the needs of a larger enterprise than the local architects, the town offices, etc. This kind of service, non-manufacturing business space is not now found in the town.

This use of the mills will raise their income to the town by changing from industry to commercial with the rent by the square foot of space. Further, by meeting commercial needs in the town, it will be more a part of the Ipswich community than the present use where most employees are not Ipswich residents.

The building size and floor height changes allow for differing use, both in one building and between buildings. The considerable depth of most of the buildings is more suited to commercial or office use where natural light is not required than in trying to convert to apartment or hotel use. Also, the demands on costs for conversion are not so large for commercial as for residential use.

However, the problems of access and parking are great. Using the standard of 300 square feet per parking space, which includes access and turning, if the entire site were converted to commercial and offices, the parking need would be close to 200,000 square feet by the standards set by the present zoning codes (1970). This is near $3/4$ of the size of the rentable square footage. Building or converting an existing building to a parking garage seems the only way to accommodate a reasonable number of cars and not tear down nearly all the existing buildings. I am not certain that the bay size or floor loads are allowable for conversion to a garage, and new construction is costly.

Finally, the traffic problems for the town, with 300-660 cars constantly circulating in the down town area, will create enormous congestion. Accessing around Saltonstall-Union Streets is not enough area -- acting more like one entrance. For such kinds of demands, there should be more and better access.

School

In 1972 the Ipswich school committee worked on a proposal for a new high school for the town. The space study for that school, with its requirements for classroom and specialized space was compared to the present mills and their site. The high school needs 127,000 square feet of space. The present buildings have 266,000 square feet, more than twice the needed square footage. With demolition to provide 250 parking spaces, there still is much more than enough available indoor space. Probably a gym and library need to be built as new structures: the gym being very specialized in space and use, the library requiring great floor loads. The depth of the old buildings is suitable for double or single loaded corridors, without excessive waste of space.

With the school at this site, the town can make more use of the school building and facilities because it is easily accessible to the town center. It has a double benefit by utilizing the river frontage. Opening up the walk across the dam connects the way from the school to the junior high and the park land behind the Whipple house. The school parking can supplement the town parking when school is not open. Access to the buildings will not significantly differ from that for the industry already there; although heavy traffic is periodic, it will be about twice that presently entering and leaving the Sylvania property. Bus loading may be difficult if it is done along Union Street.

The major drawbacks to a school in this site is the lack

of land for sports facilities. The only way that land for sports fields can be provided is in another location. A high school demands the greatest space commitment for athletic fields of any level of school, but this site is really so small. The only space available near this land is used as the Sylvania parking lot on Topsfield Road.

Further, the conversion to a school would remove a large building complex from the tax roles.

Hotel/Motel

Converting the Sylvania buildings to a hotel or motel would admirably respond to the river edge. Opening the first floor along the river side for public rooms and dining would give both the town and the visitors a fine view of the tidal and non-tidal river frontage, the marsh and fields behind the Whipple house, and the buildings across from the mill on South Main Street, called "a miniature Venice" in an early twentieth century photo of them which is in the Historical Society collection. Ipswich has few motels and no hotels, despite a heavy summer trade. Further, it would profit extensively from the Spring and Fall New England touring if it had good hotel accommodations. These buildings are well situated for enjoying the town. The shopping area of the town lies at the end of the block, the South Green and the rest of the older part of town are just across the dam on the river. The steeples of the churches on both greens are clearly visible from this site, orienting the visitor to the town layout. Much of what is to be seen is within a walk of the mill buildings.

Such a conversion would keep the taxes from the buildings and land, assuring the town of income from the property. While the present space is too large to convert wholly to hotel/motel use, there is room to pick and choose which buildings to save, making the rest of the site parking and grounds. With accommodations for 150 units, the suggested parking level is just over 150 cars, a load way below that for commercial uses or school.

The article on both hotels and motels in Time Saver Stan-

dards emphasizes that the most important commodity for hotel/motel construction is efficient use of space and an efficient building. Because conversion is not building to a specific demand, space economy is difficult. Nonetheless, with a choice of building depths from 40 to 95 feet, several room plans may be worked out of double loaded corridors or other means. Time Saver Standards further suggests that the cost of construction is gauged by costs of \$1,000 for every \$1 of room rent. For a rental of \$17.00, the unit can cost \$17,000. The present evaluation of the site is 60% of actual for \$638,000, so the site and buildings could cost approximately \$1,000,000. With a rental of 150 rooms at \$17.00 per night, the construction costs would be approximately \$2,550,000. Subtracting the land and building costs would leave about \$10,000 per unit for installation of plumbing, closets and walls, and full furnishing of the room, plus any repairs and changes in the whole structure to meet codes and safety standards. This estimate also excludes costs for some demolition, for lobbies, restaurants, parking and other needs vital to making the hotel function.

Another point to be considered in examining the feasibility of a hotel on this site is the actual demand. To run a resort/seasonal hotel, there must be an overall occupancy rate of 50%.¹⁶ Time Saver Standards says that this is difficult for a motel of more than 50 units. Yet, Ipswich is too far from major roads and large industrial areas for its hotel to meet the business-

¹⁶Frank Harrison Randolph, "Motels," Time Saver Standards, 4th ed., 1966, p. 1070.

man's trade. It seems that the tourist season trade would be its mainstay, requiring either a smaller establishment or a great drawing power. Finally, Ipswich must be regarded as but part of the whole region of interesting places to visit. It is not important enough to draw tourists just to it, and therefore, it would have to compete with the surrounding towns and their inns and hotels to fill its hotel.

Apartments

For somewhat the same reasons as for a hotel, the river frontage is well-suited for conversion to apartments. The river site is beautiful with views down to the Choate Bridge and up to the wooded area by South Green. With the further improvements coming as the residents and property owners respond to the benefits of the river in the town center, this site will grow in importance to the river frontage area as a choice housing location. Further, apartments here are close to the shopping, the town centers and churches, and the train. There is eady access to parks and schools. There are fine walks, a canoe launch, and soon-to-be good fishing in the river. It provides a fairly urbanized form of apartment dwelling, without much private land and well-integrated into the site, with the benefits of the town. With this character, apartments will most likely attract young or older people without children living at home.

While conversion costs can only be speculative, the costs of conversion will be greater for apartments than for a school or offices. All of these have fire and code specifications to meet that are different from the present code requirements, but apartments require greater sound-proofing and apartment isolation, more plumbing and services. These needs, however, will be less than for a hotel.

With approximate apartment sizes of 620 square feet for a one bedroom, 805 square feet for a two bedroom, 985 square feet for a three bedroom, and 1210 square feet for a four bedroom

unit, the buildings will hold approximately 200-250 apartments. Parking can be provided at one car per unit there or on the adjoining Sylvania lot. This parking load is higher than other uses of the site, but for commercial use, and it would occur throughout the day, not a specific times.

Finally, the unusual depth of the buildings, especially along the river, makes for difficult ventilation of apartments. A depth of 80-100 feet is too great for a standard through building units, and the narrow passage between the buildings on Union Street and those on the river is not adequate for the only exterior frontage for a non-urban apartment unit without great improvement in that 30 foot space. The building along Union Street, which is fifty feet deep, however, is well suited for a conversion to apartment use, as are buildings 9 and 10 and building 11.

New Construction

Any examination of new construction on this site must be somewhat hypothetical, regarding the interest in and use of the river frontage as well as mass of the buildings and its use. But because the residents have shown interest in larger stores that provide the services of a department store, that is the kind of building looked at.

The site has 3.9 acres or 1,698,840 square feet. The zoning ordinance requires one parking space or 300 square feet in parking for every 300 square feet of floor space in retail stores. Storage or warehouse space requires one parking space for every 1,000 square feet of floor space. Therefore, with a one story building having 200,000 square feet of storage in a second story would require a little more than half the site for parking, or about 850,000 square feet of parking. Further, zoning requires a 25 foot setback for buildings in industrial districts and 25 foot side yards. The parking needs a strip of planting to shield it from the road.

The proposed building of approximately 800,000 square feet first floor space will be at the side of the site farthest from the town commercial area, so that the parking will be useable for the town also, tying this commercial development into existing commercial uses. Parking, therefore, will be on top of the part of the Sylvania plant that now sticks out into the river. This also is better than building on that site, as the landfill and supporting of parking is easier and less risky than filling for a construction. Parking extends over half of the site,

from the river to Union Street. Along Estes Street the store fills the site from the street to the river, with a loading area either on Estes Street or where the present Sylvania loading area is.

Large, single building department stores do not need natural lighting or small units of space; therefore, the building may be essentially windowless and a single, large volume in design. This box will undoubtedly have no relation to the river, as that is expensive and extraneous to volume selling.

This use of the site will be the most distressing use for all. It will ignore the river, choak the down town river frontage with parking, radically change the scale of town center construction, destroy the residential quality of Estes Street with a large building and a constant flow of traffic. It will destroy the scale of those buildings facing the river, irreparably harming any intended uses of the river as park either behind the town stores or near the Whilple house. Finally, it will encourage further development of this kind and scale in those areas adjacent to the Sylvania site. With the large amount of accessible land along Topsfield Road, next to the railroad and along Hammett Street, this kind of expansion certainly is feasible. So major a scale change would certainly jeopardize the existing 19th century commercial area on Market, South Main, and Central Streets.

The examination of the Sylvania site picks out several aspects of redevelopment of the site that must be avoided: demolition of the entire building complex and replacement by a single, mass building; large areas of parking, particularly against the existing small scale construction adjacent to the site; and heavy traffic flow to that site if traffic also will be increasing on Topsfield Road and Washington Street. Similar points of controlling size, scale and intensity of traffic also are applicable to the rest of the town center if the small scale and architectural homogeneity of the town center is to be maintained.

By tighter zoning and design control of the whole area, new construction can better fit with the existing buildings while also differing from them. But before discussing a particular area and solution for its future, the two means of design and use control allowed at present by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts need full clarification.

Massachusetts does not permit design control per se by law for the municipalities of the state. The only powers granted in this realm are those of zoning and controls under the Historic District Act. The Commonwealth does not permit architectural boards of review, except as advisory boards suggesting changes in use or design, but unable to wield any actual power.

Zoning is established to promote "the health, safety, convenience, morals or welfare of its inhabitants."¹⁷ It gives

¹⁷Zoning Regulations, General Court of Massachusetts, Chapter 40A, Section 2.

definite controls limiting height and size of buildings, lot size and placement of buildings on a lot, use of building and lands, protects against noxious trades.¹⁸ But because design control is an arbitrary term, zoning cannot be included in the welfare of the inhabitants.

Court rulings on zoning decisions as well as testing of the by-laws before enactment are based on whether the law gives the defendant rights to know what can or cannot be done within a reasonable certainty. While responding to the zoning law gives a proposed building a certain configuration in which it must sit, in no way can these constraints be construed to lead to good design. While following exactly these constraints as well as the dictates of the building code most often leads directly to bad design.

Design control in Ipswich can be a means of testing the fit of new constructions and alterations in the old fabric as well as providing better overall new design in new developments to bind together the edges of the new construction and the existing environs. Further, it allows for more interrelatedness of uses by emphasizing form rather than use. However, design control can exist only under the Historic District Act in Massachusetts. In that context, the commission of the district can rule to "prevent developments incongruous to the historic aspects or architectural character of the surroundings and of the historic District."¹⁹ Specifically, the design controls of the

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Historic District Act, General Court of Massachusetts, Chapter 40C, Section 7.

commission cover:

the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features of the buildings and structures in the surrounding area. In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings or structures the commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity,...and in appropriate cases impose dimensional and setback requirements in addition to those required by applicable ordinance or by-law.²⁰

The law then goes on to say that interior arrangement or architectural features not subject to public view cannot be considered under this law.

The shortcomings of the Historic District Act for Ipswich is that it cannot be applied to all of the town without stretching the meaning of the initial law. The purpose states that the areas protected can be important for their architectural or their historic worth or both. They can be important to the history of the town as well as the Commonwealth and nation. Still, it is difficult to construe the meaning so that all the buildings and places of Ipswich are of architectural importance. While the controls of the commission in matters of determining suitable design state that the district itself as well as the architectural character of the surrounding can also fall under the Commission's rule,²¹ that "surrounding" will undoubtedly

²⁰Ibid., Section 2.

²¹Ibid., Section 7

be difficult to fit to the entire town of 33 square miles.

The reason, primarily, for limiting the reign of a commission with the power to approve suitable design is the "compatible" or "suitable" or "good" design is recognizable yet without definition. This is not to say that there is no possibility for directing design to be responsive and fitting with an existing built area, even while that design does not mimic the buildings with which it must fit. Rather, the problem arises where there is nothing particularly distinctive nearby to compare the buildings in question to, and yet, the building still reflects on the area.

If a means could be found to legislate, in a similar manner as zoning, for the architectural quality of new construction, certainly the establishment of power of control for such legislation would be forthcoming. But as long as the controls will be left to the arbitrary control of a commission, the decisions will necessarily reflect that five or seven persons' response to what they feel is "good" rather than to a general welfare. Therefore, within the limits of a definable area of architecture important to the town and region, the state and nation, the whole of the town center, as noted on the map, can be an historic district, or more properly, to the description of the area, an architectural preservation district. This area and its surroundings can then fall under the jurisdiction of a commission established to maintain the qualities of that district.

In the historic district, or, more suitably the architectural district, there are enough examples of what is desired to

to make guidelines for determination for the new construction and alterations. Some of these guidelines can also be applied in the surrounding areas of the district to create a buffer zone for the more intensely preserved area.

Guidelines attempt to take some of the arbitrariness out of the actions of the commission. They also serve as guides for the proper protection of specific important architectural sites. While developed from the general area specified for control in the legislation, they can more particularly be interpreted in each area covered in the jurisdiction.

Ipswich architectural importance and its character comes from the buildings set out in space along the streets and greens of the town. Only in the commercial area are the buildings built as a wall along a space or lining one side of a street. The most outstanding characteristics of the environment are the buildings' masses, the relationship between buildings and between building and street, the detailing and scale-determining characteristics of the structures, and finally, the materials used in the buildings. Yet the actual character of the buildings themselves cannot be distilled to a few measures, for the contrast runs from the simplest one story saltbox to Victorian gingerbread and large block Victorian commercial blocks. For this reason, in applying guidelines there must be a range into which new design and changing can be permissible in each area covered in the guidelines. Being too specific with limits to design might direct new construction toward reproductions rather than to new design. Architectural preserva-

tion must never mean conversion of an area to a museum or an unusable but treasured area. The scope of the commission's decisions must permit renewal and changes in the fabric while maintaining an integrity of form and perhaps even enhancing that integration.

Ipswich, in its Proposed Historic District Act stated among the purposes "to benefit the Vacation-travel industry,"²² but surely that is not an aim of such legislation, for it must specifically be directed toward the greater enjoyment of the residents of the town, by improving the environment as well as protecting it.

As zoning responds to the needs of an area while also being particular to each lot in the area, so should the guidelines. Making a checklist of the factors that generally determine the character of an area and then noting whether or not the building in question fits to a majority of the criterion is not specific enough.

This does not completely define the range into which the choice must fit, but permits either the decision in favor of a distilled mean or a copy of something existing. By determining each feature within the confines of those features as seen in the block or in the five buildings on either side and the ten across the street from the site, taking the maximum and minimum of each element, a range is established (e.g., window size from the largest on the block to the smallest on the block). This too does not allow wholly new design except by action of the commission over the guidelines under which it works, but it

does more than point out areas of interest by giving real dimensions to those parameters.

The parameters themselves are extracted from the form of the architecture of Ipswich and the space made from the architecture. In many ways this list is typical to Ipswich, while in the town itself, these considerations have slightly different weight in different sectors of the town.

1-Mass. By and large, the buildings of Ipswich are seen in the round, not just as facades. The form that the volume of the building and its additions takes determines much of the character of the streets as well as of the individual structures. This term expresses the kind of architecture made of additions and ell's as well as the bay windows, added porches, Greek revival porticos, and towers of the Victorian buildings.

2-Height and Cornice. While the whole town is controlled to a 35 foot or three story height limit by zoning, in some parts of town the relation of the cornice to the height, while not the actual roof style, is important.

3-Setback. Zoning covers a minimum setback, but here the setback should also respond to the exact location, to the relation to the street and the buildings opposite.

4-Fenestration. The size of window opens and proportion of each facade taken up by openings is related among buildings, though the range is great from the 17th century residence.

5-Material. Most all buildings in the town are wood; those that are not are brick, but wood has many uses in clapboard, shingle, flush board.

6-Detail and Scale Considerations. While new construction seldom can or should imitate the gingerbread or even the Greek revival, relation to the scale of that detail is important to the preservation of the region.

Noting that all the above considerations are actually determined in the field by taking the adjacent buildings and buildings opposite, if part of the same area, and determining the maximum and minimum allowance for each factor from the maximum and minimum on those buildings examined.

As to other factors such as paving, planting fences, paint color; most of these considerations, while integral to the design of the area, are not significantly known historically to make a determining judgment. Paving and curbing of the streets, the need for only one access or driveway per building, and the amount and configuration of parking should be covered by the zoning board or other appropriate board. The district commission can make recommendations or review, but it is better to have them concentrate on already complicated considerations. Further, in almost every instance, no one knows the original color of even the most historic buildings in town. Even the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities has really only begun careful research in determining early American paints. To insist that people paint their homes Williamsburg colors may be non-historical as well as aggravating to personal independence. Nearly the same is true of fences, except where an original fence still exists or is known. In the case of fences, however, they can block the space if they are con-

structed too high, so that there should be height limits of fences.

The interpretation of guidelines differs in the different parts of town, and there also are new zoning controls to go with these different areas. Looking at the map of the architectural district, note that most of the areas correspond to similar zoning districts.

In the largely residential areas now designated by zoning as Old and Historic Colonial and Intown Residential, the zoning needs the addition of a maximum lot size of the largest lot in the area having a single family house a size close to 150 feet in frontage, the depth is not of great consequence. In the areas away from High Street, Summer Street, Green Street, and East Street, this lot size limit should be larger, however, buildings much greater than those existing and densities significantly less than at present are inconsistent with these areas. There also should be specified only one driveway or other auto access per lot and no drive-in angle parking in front. This area has a character determined prior to the extensive introduction of the automobile; its scale is, in part, determined by the front yard and the relation to the street, parking of cars detracts from that. When there are parking lots on these areas, they also should conform to the maximum lot size, and they should be shielded by a fence and/or planting. The consistency of the area depends on not having the space broken by large areas of parking. For the stores and shops in these areas what cannot be provided for in parallel

parking should be accommodated in parking beside, or, preferably, behind the building. On both greens and along the major road through town -- 1A -- special care is needed to protect the space so parking lots should definitely be prohibited, except in Lord's Square, as noted later.

On the river side of South Main Street, zoning should provide that all building be without setback or have a five foot maximum setback to keep the street edge that exists there now in both the residential and commercial buildings. Protection of the hard edge of buildings lining the street is not necessary because there already are some gaps between the buildings, and an occasional view to the river and the mill adds variety to the street. Zoning can provide for either a small side yard or bearing wall buildings. Because the lots are not deep, and both the river behind and the street in front hold great importance to the town and use of the site, no parking requirements need apply to new constructions on this side of South Main Street.

Similarly, on the east side of Market Street, parking requirements only threaten that the river frontage is to be taken by asphalt instead of being used for the public or clientele of the stores and businesses on the street.

Indeed, an excellent provision of the Historic District Act should be that the river be taken as a site and that all properties fronting on it must properly maintain the waters' edge. The business located along the river need to utilize the river edge, either by direct access or by visual access

from the buildings along the river.

Also, as part of the Market Street area guidelines, new construction should be encouraged rather than breaking the wall of Market Square with introduction of parking lots, deeper setbacks, or more driveways and accesses.

Keeping Market Street, Central Street, and part of Washington Street in the pedestrian-oriented form it now has, encouraging no gaps in the street fronts, protects the old commercial area and its relation to the green and the rest of the residential areas. Then, changing the kind of commercial building along Topsfield Road and behind the old commercial buildings on Hammett Street and Brown Square provides needed expansion space and room for another kind of commercial development.

This area and its development needs tighter control than that given in current zoning. It too needs maximum lot size to prevent buildings or parking lots too big to occur in Ipswich. Maximum set backs keep buildings from getting too far from the road relative to the rest of commercial buildings that are on the sidewalk. If buildings on Topsfield Road are too far back from the road, they fall below the crest of the hill where a narrower space provides a better entrance into town. As in the rest of town, access to parking spaces needs to be through a parking entrance, not directly off the street. Direct parking from the street inhibits traffic flow and fades the line between street and other uses.

Although this area is a part of the preservation area, and there are a few fine buildings that would profit being saved,

there is little directing character to the area from which to extract elements that establish points of comparison for new construction other than the old buildings in the neighborhood. Limiting lot sizes, height, setback, parking and access, signs encourage proper usage. But the district commission can only recommend the guidelines as good design and put forward directives.

The present look of Lord's Square also provokes questions about its future form. This area has unfortunately fallen prey to half automobile-oriented development while many of the remaining wood buildings are of fine local quality. The new stores and gas stations, sitting back from the roads permit the space and all the roads running into the square to merge, instead of separating out and defining the roads. While the scale and form of most of the new construction is not actually grating on the residences and wood structures still remaining, the setbacks and building placement and landscaping is. Now that half of the square has one form while the rest is different, the town must decide either to permit continuing change and more open space or else find a way to re-establish the edge between the road and the property line. Without the definition of the street edge, all the streets coming into Lord's Square run together. Therefore, making the edge more distinct will be the more helpful solution. Besides curbing and planting, some fencing, retain the close tie of remaining old buildings to the street edge and restrict parking as much as possible on the street frontage.

This covers all the areas inside the historic district, in regards to change and establishing means to encourage the proper change. Another aspect of historic district legislation is that it protects existing important architecture. Demolition or changes of existing buildings must be considered by the commission, preventing needless destruction. This act does not cover the interior architecture of buildings, so that the existing Ipswich project to buy covenants of protection is the only means of maintenance of the interiors of important buildings.

But historic district legislation does permit control by the commission of changes of properties surrounding the historic or architectural area. Therefore, the town, in addition to the actual district should establish a protective area in a ring around the town center. In that area the commission's jurisdiction should not be so all encompassing as in the town center, but should more tightly control land use and parking than presently is done by zoning, and also decide on demolitions, changes in topography, and the mass and scale of buildings.

The commission should, in addition to duties governing the design of additions, changes, constructions and features, have suggestion power relation to selection of street furniture, paving, placement of planting, but because they must judge on important issues where a possible system of judgment can be established, their duties in relation to these considerations should only be advisory. In this way they also are permitted to consider the entire town, knowing each aspect of it to better form decisions but making judgment only where some criterion for

judging has been established and directions outlined.

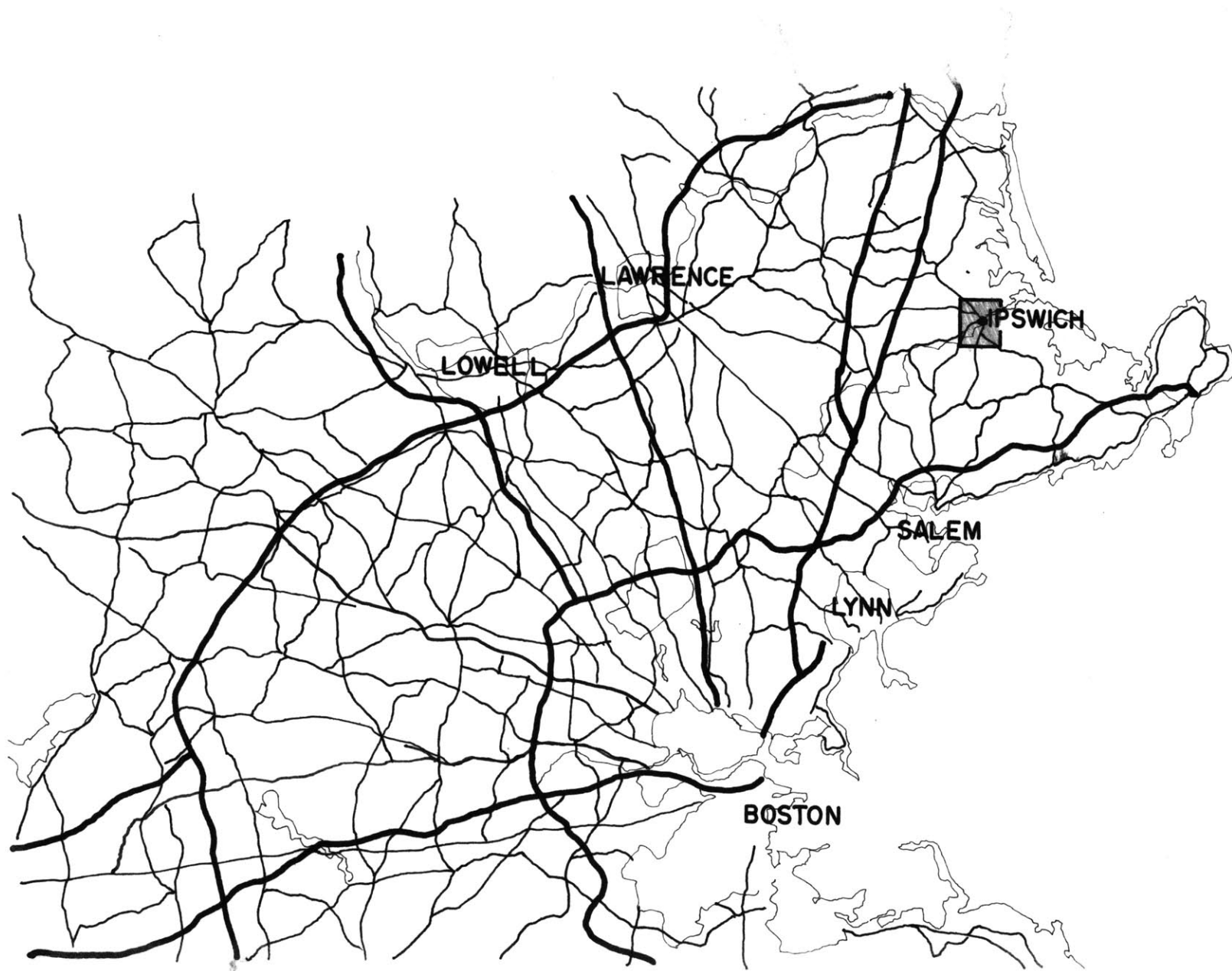
While establishing an architectural district of the town of Ipswich protects the important buildings, the historic sites, and the architectural integrity of the town, this legislation, in its present form does not meet the real needs of the small American town. Yes, it encourages protection, and by a broader view of what is architecturally and spatially important, it encourages re-use and conversion of the town's building stock while also responding to new change and needs. But, this legislation cannot respond to the demands placed on a town by strip zoning or large acreage zoning that holds no control over construction of massive boxes and wide variation in form of buildings.

It does seem possible that if a means of specifically determining appropriate design can be found, by a formula, not by subjective judgment, then that kind of control can be used in zoning, for zoning does act to "pay" due regard to the characteristics of the different parts of the city or town.²² Certainly such legislation can act under promotion of the welfare of the inhabitants.

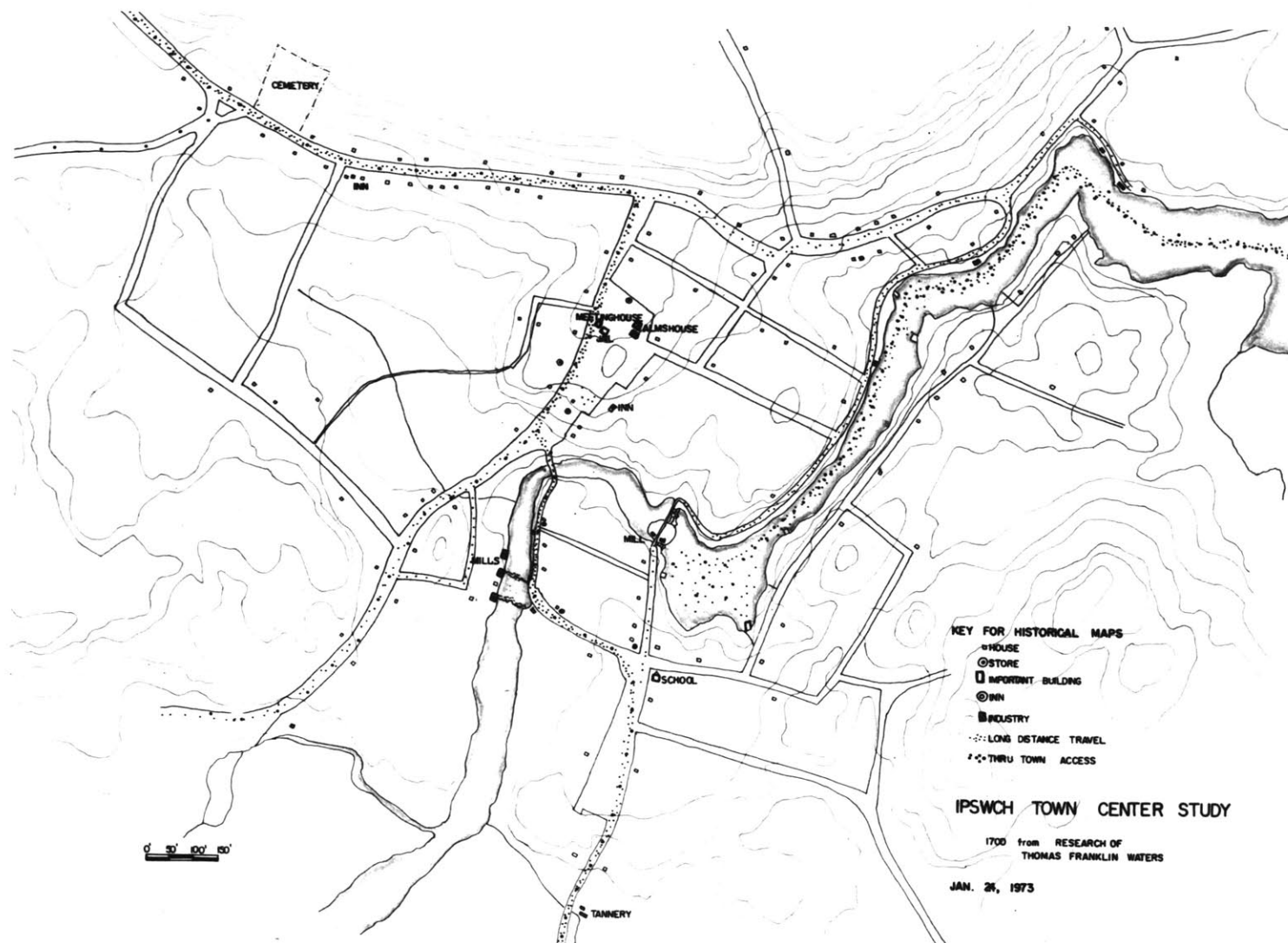
Until that time where such a method can be developed, those areas of homogeneous or distinctive architecture and spaces can find protection and controlled growth through a broad application of Historic Districts, through establishment of tighter zoning, with an historic commission guided by a list of the

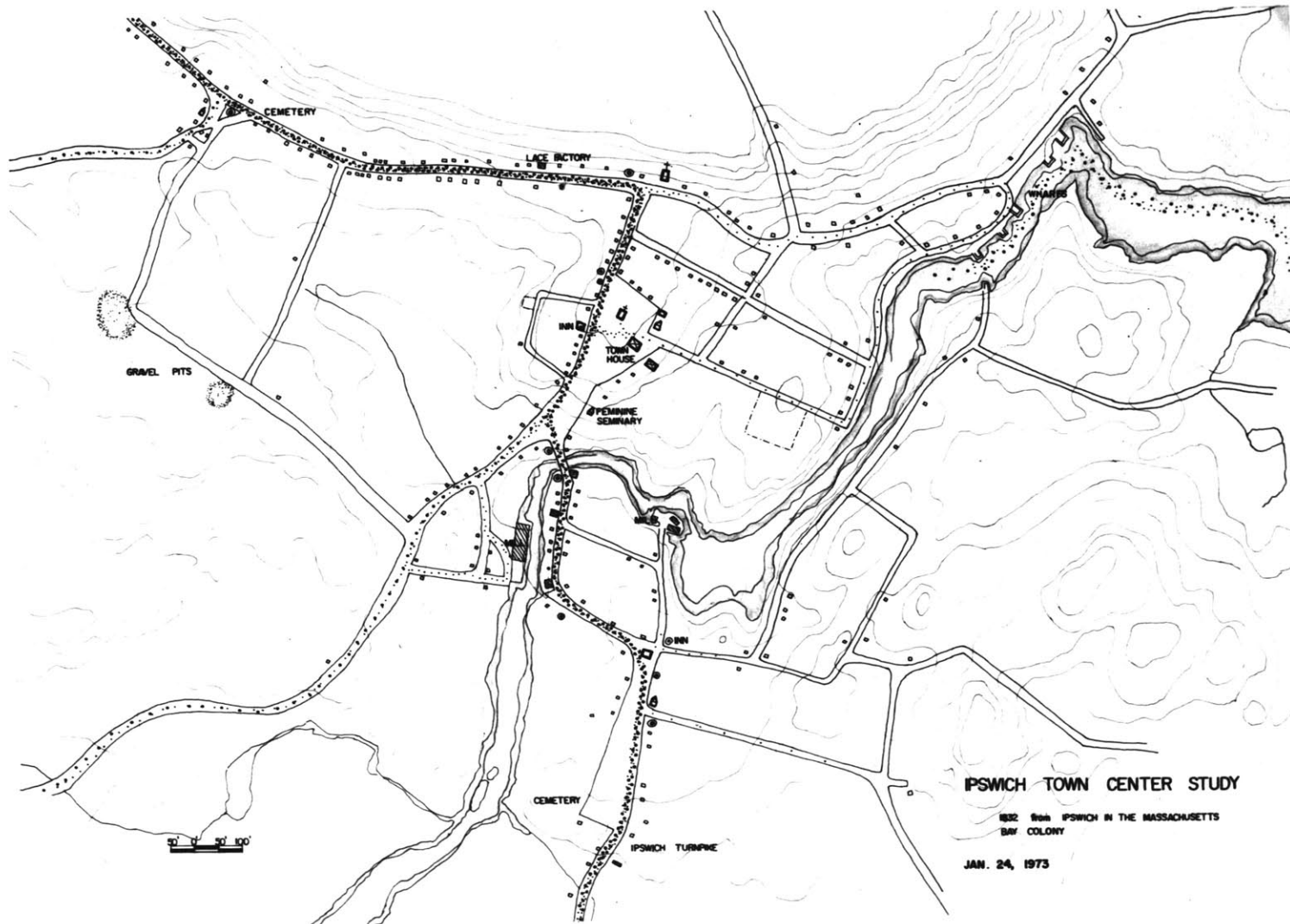
²²Proposed Ipswich Historic District Act, Section 1.

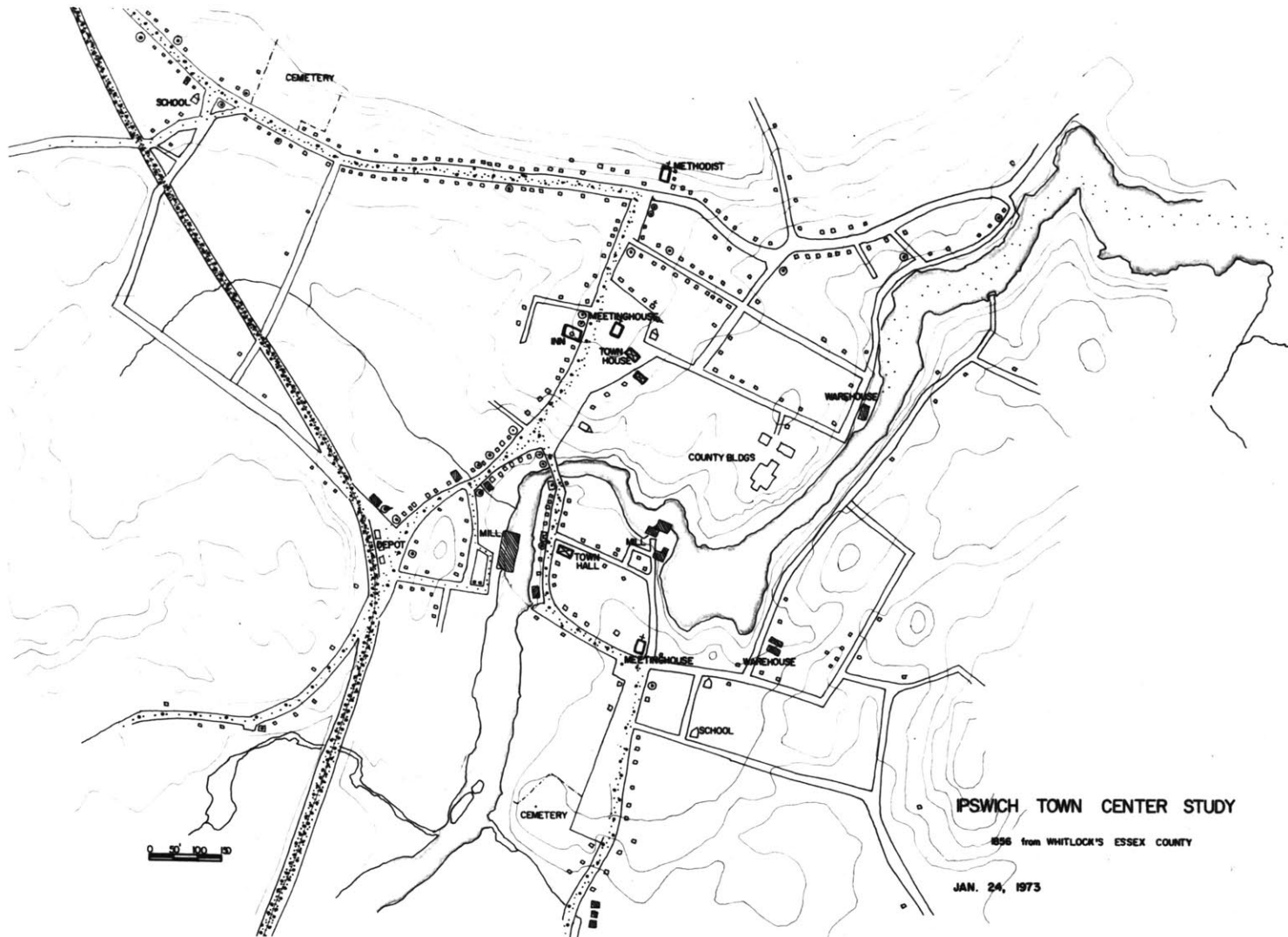
the important factors of the architectural preservation area,
and through constant examination of methods of utilizing old
buildings and meeting the needs of new functions.







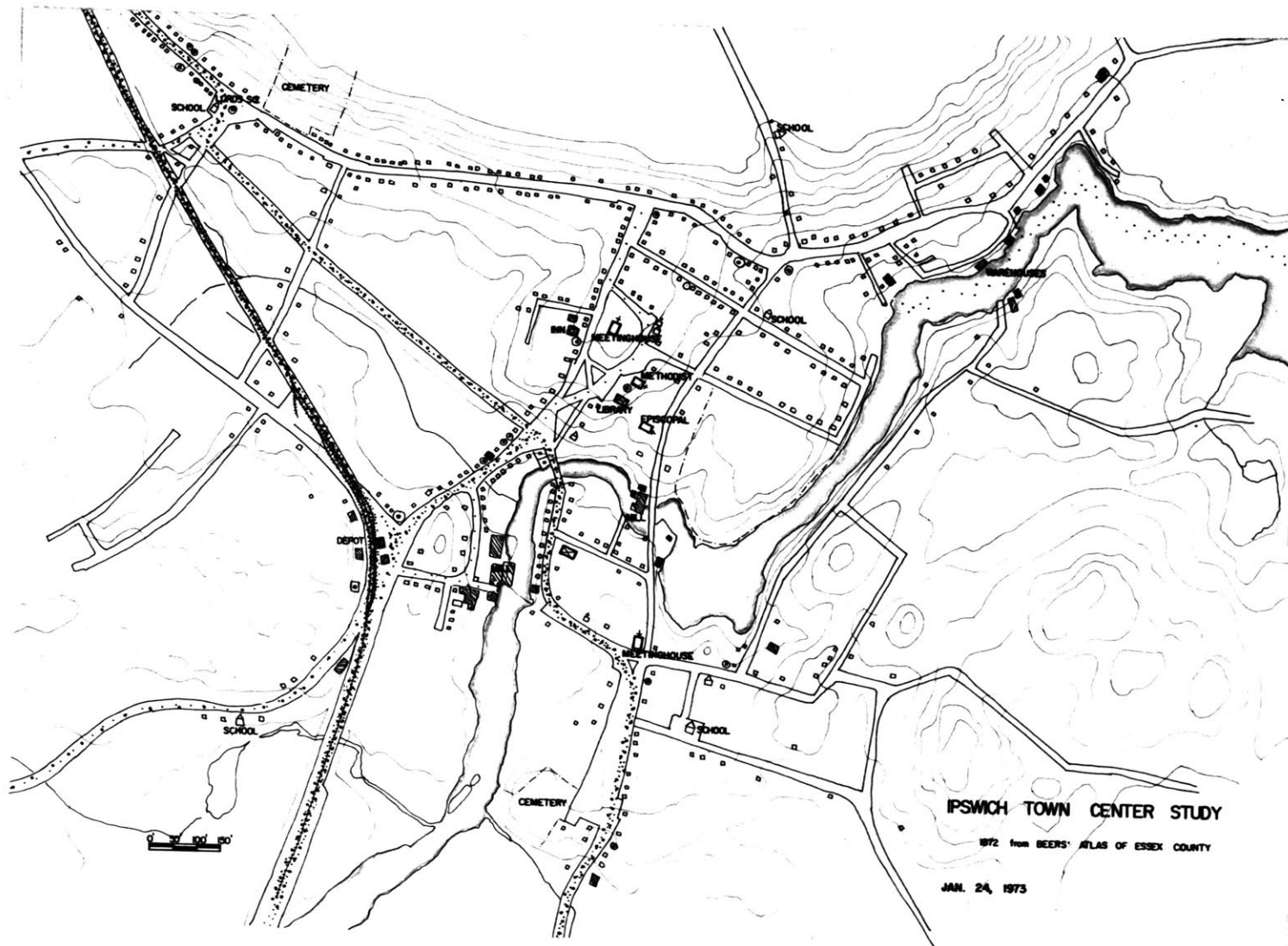


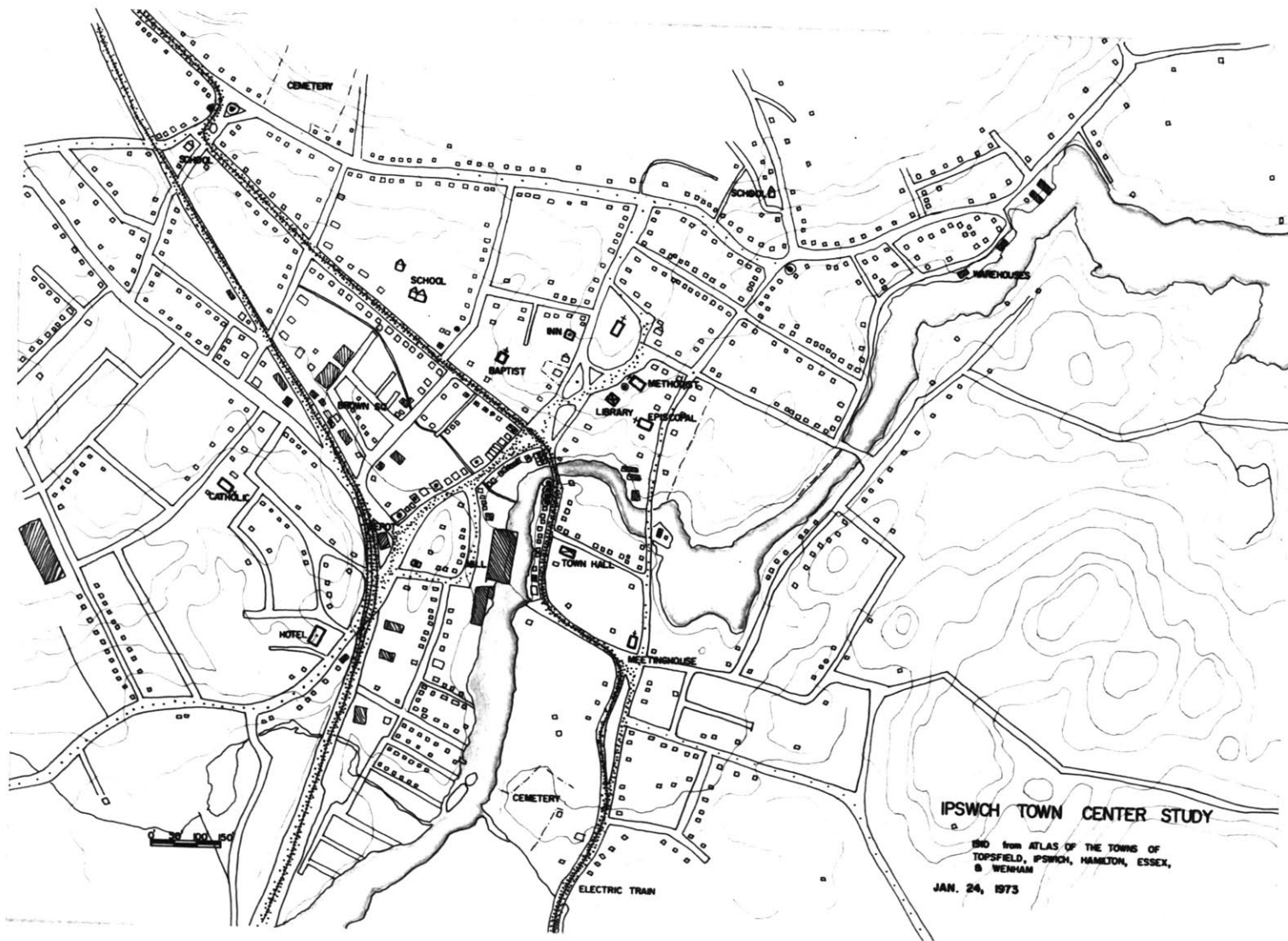


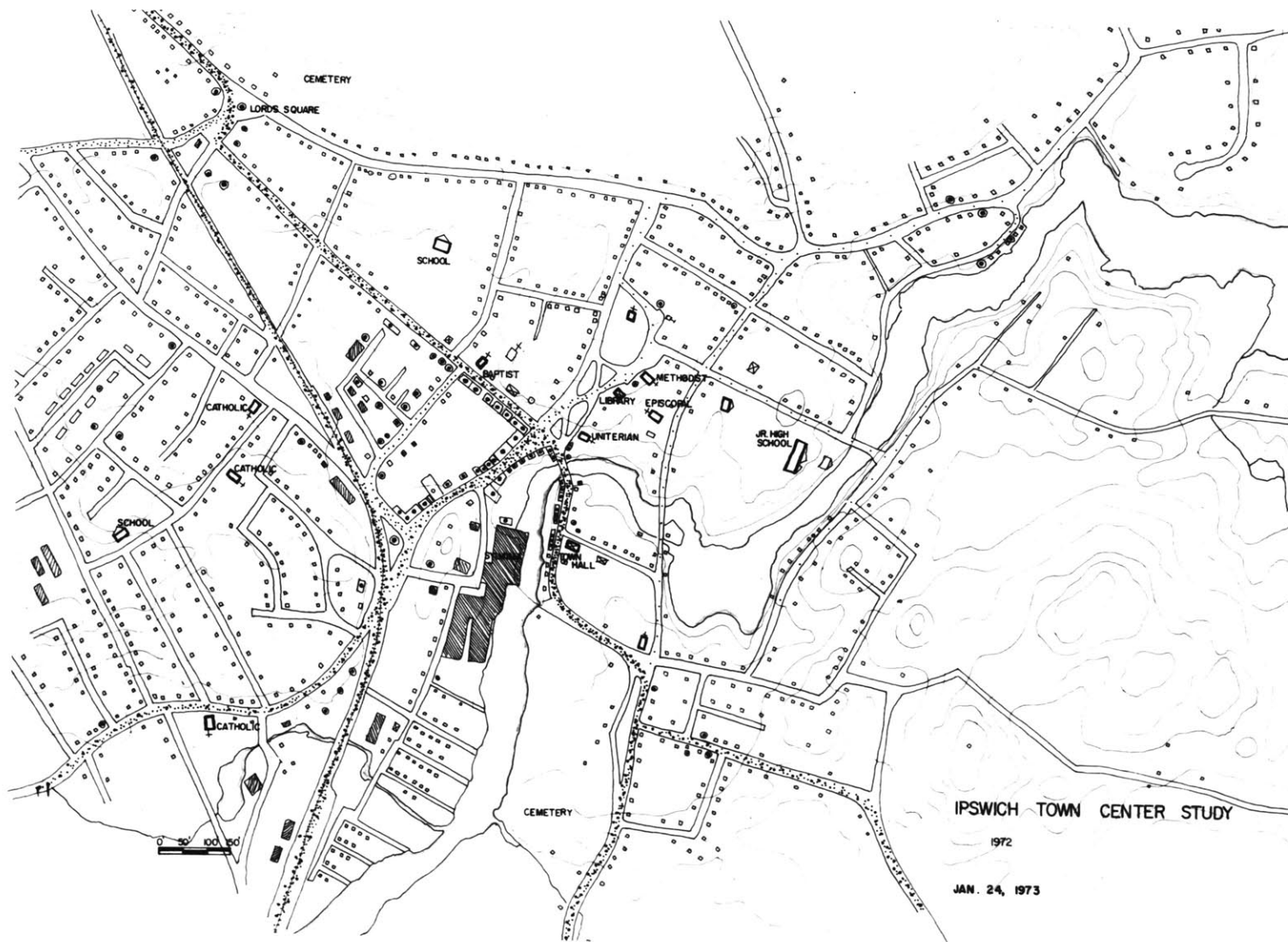
IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

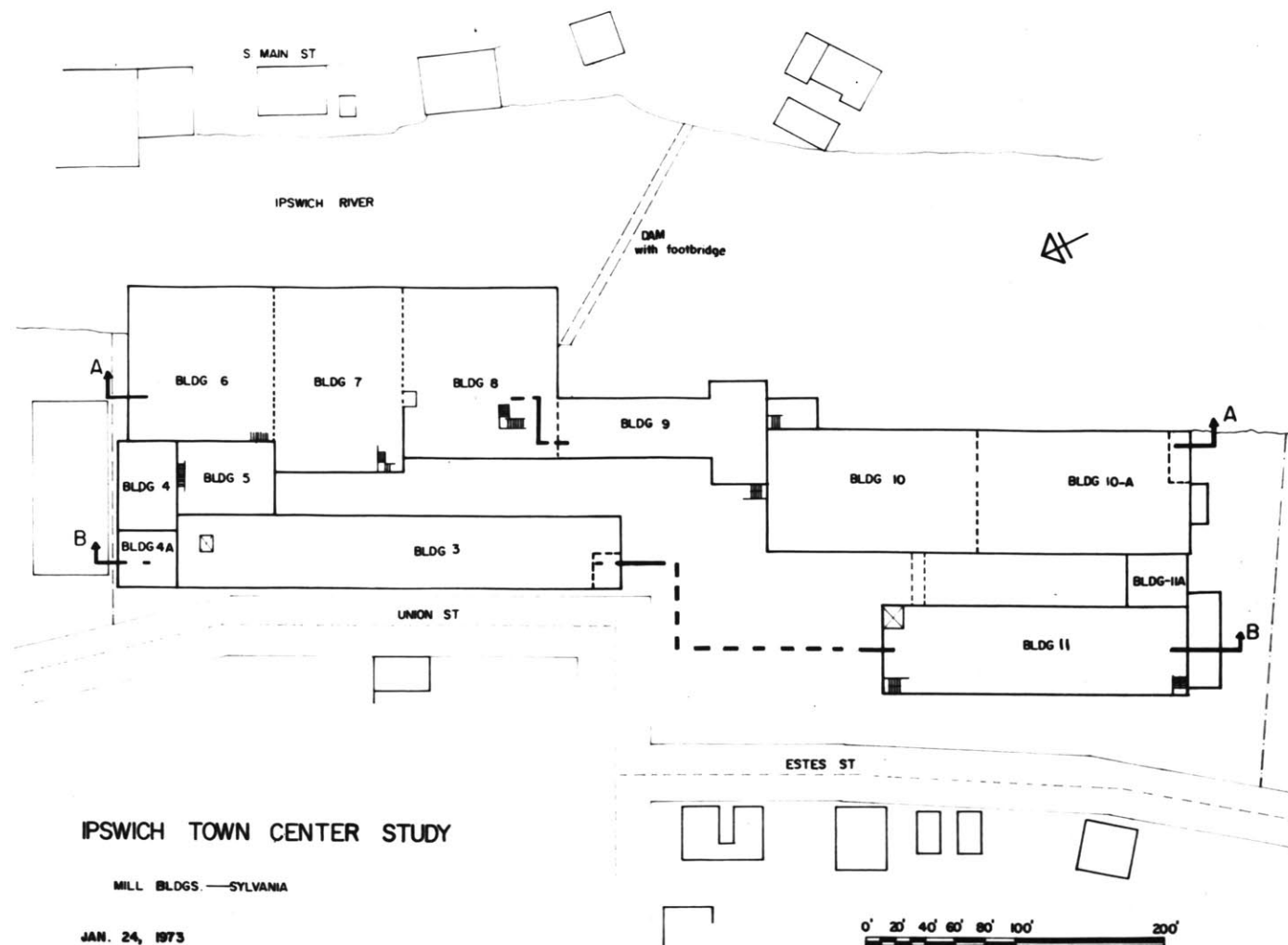
1856 from WHITLOCK'S ESSEX COUNTY

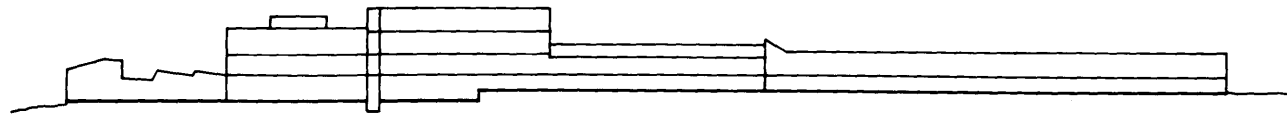
JAN. 24, 1973



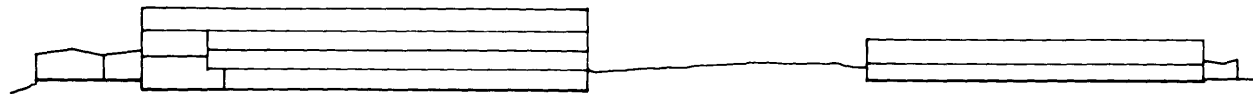








SECTION A-A

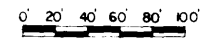


SECTION B-B

IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

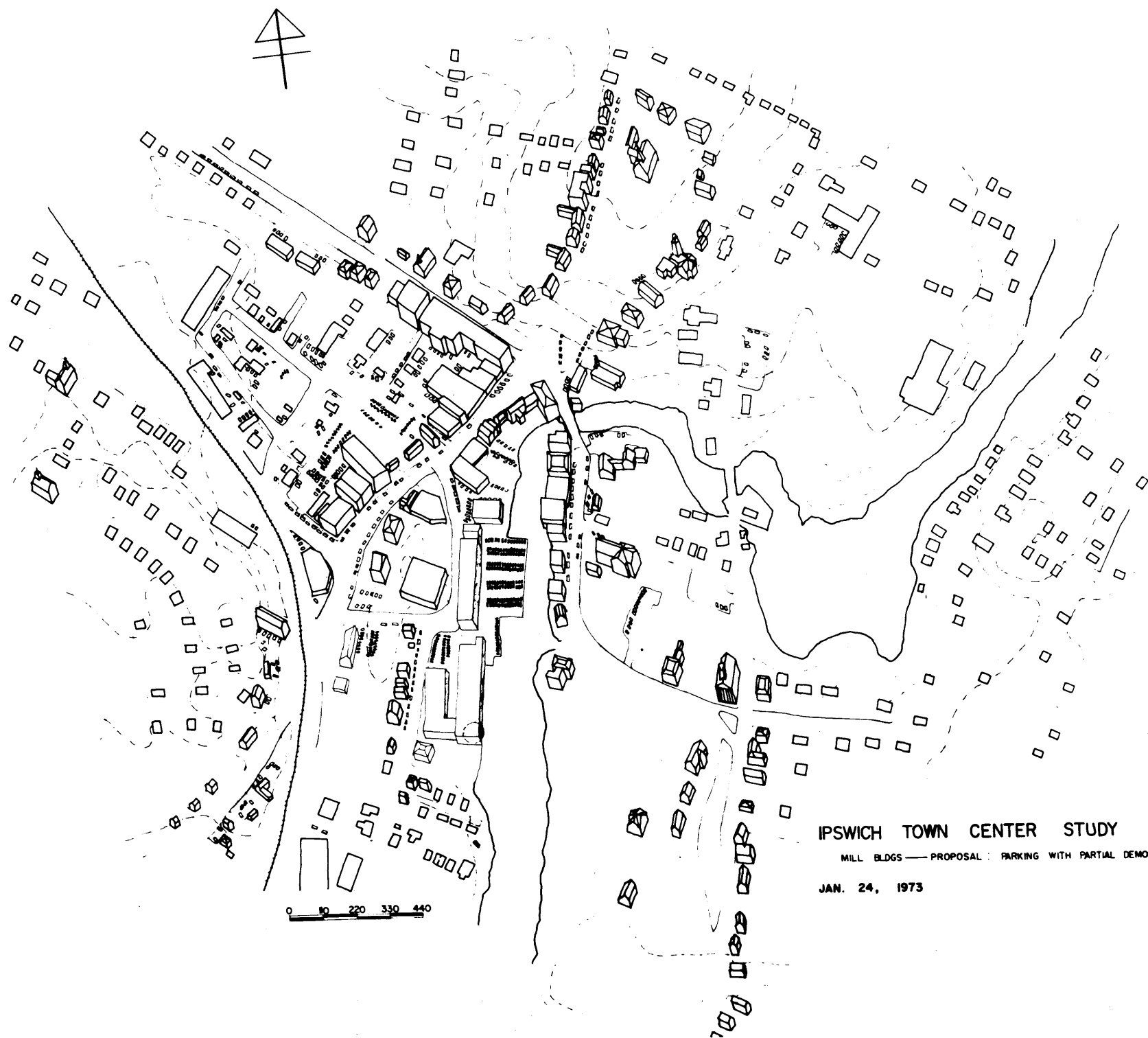
MILL BLDGS ---SYLVANIA

JAN. 24, 1973



SYLVANIA BUILDINGS

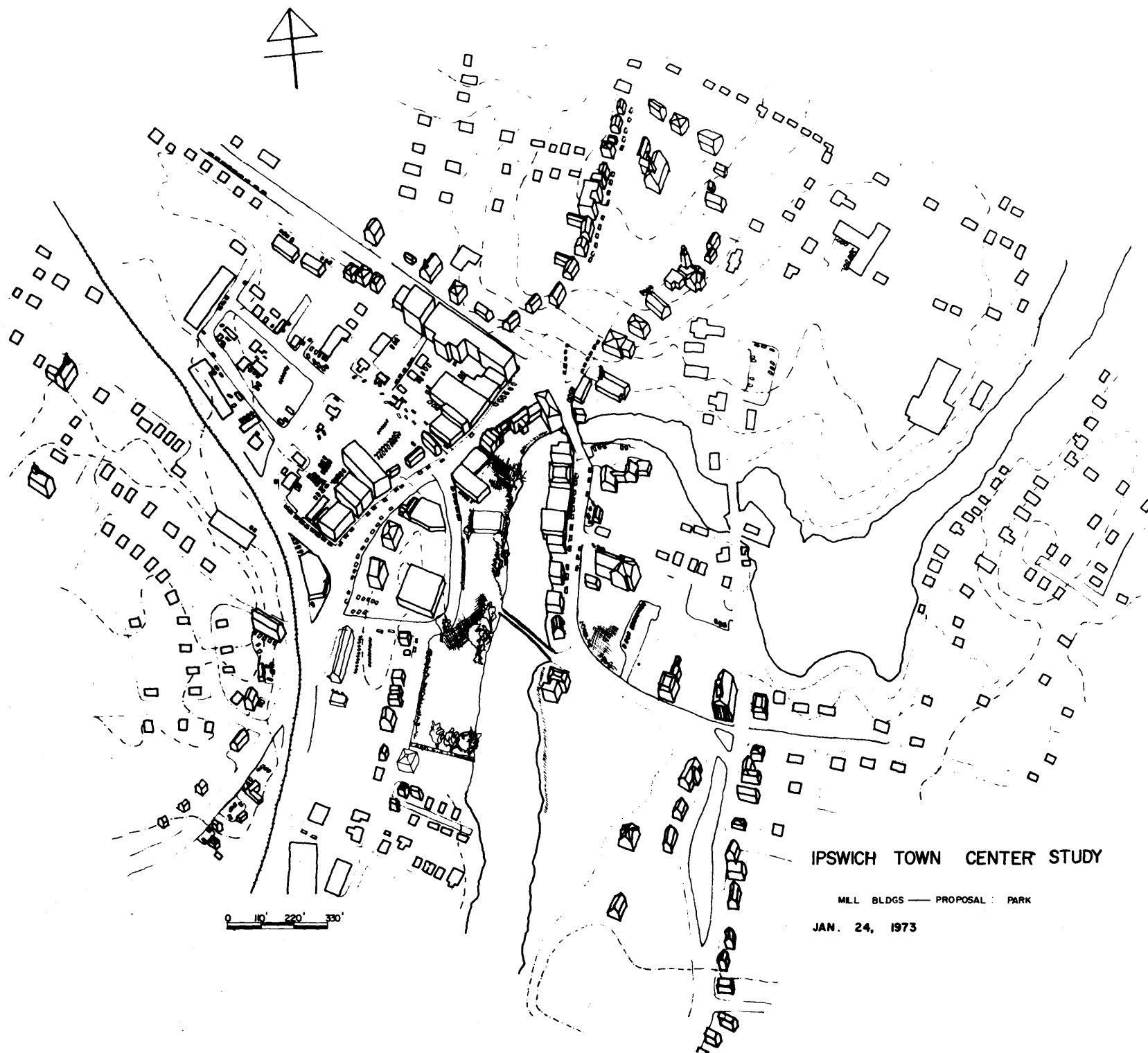
<u>Building</u>	<u>Floor</u>	<u>Ceiling Heights</u>	<u>Floor Area</u>	<u>Total Sq. Ftg.</u>
3	1st 2nd 3rd 4th	13' 11' 11' 13'	275 x 50 18,750	75,000
4A		15'	48 x 24 1,152	1,152
4		15'	40 x 100 4,000	4,000
5	1st 2nd	21' 10'	66 x 50 3,300	6,600
6		12'	105 x 98 10,290	10,290
7	1st 2nd 3rd	15' 13' 15'	87 x 115 10,005	30,015
8	1st 2nd 3rd 4th	14' 11' 13' 15'	104 x 115 11,960	47,840
9	1st 2nd 3rd	9' 11' 8'	40 x 134 5,360	16,080
10 & 10A	1st 2nd	15' 10'	84 x 286 24,024	48,024
11	1st 2nd	10' 10'	60 x 207 12,420	24,840
11A		10'	35 x 41 1,435	<u>1,435</u>
			TOTAL	265,276



IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

MILL BLDGS — PROPOSAL: PARKING WITH PARTIAL DEMOLITION

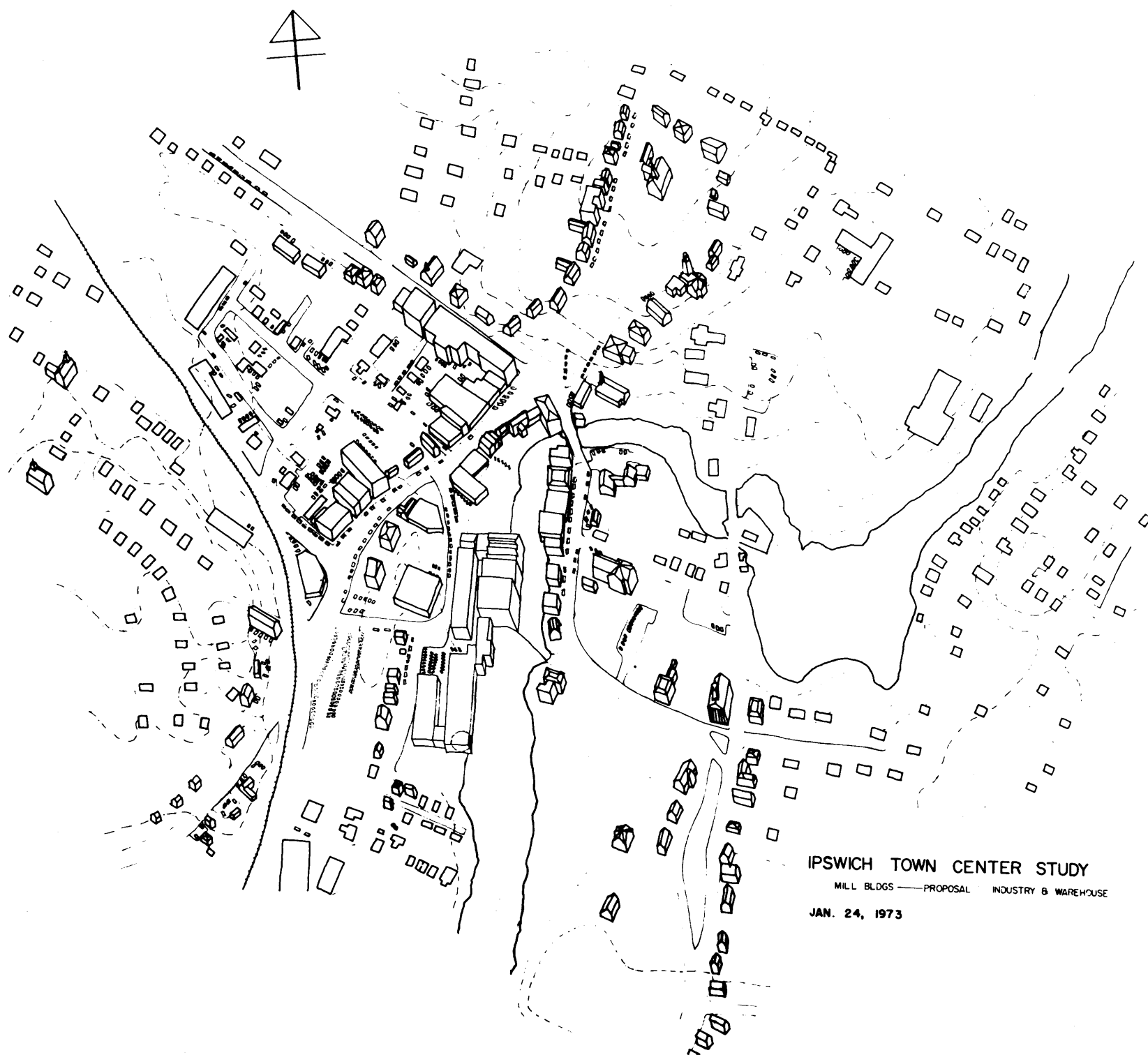
JAN. 24, 1973



IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

MLL BLDGS — PROPOSAL : PARK

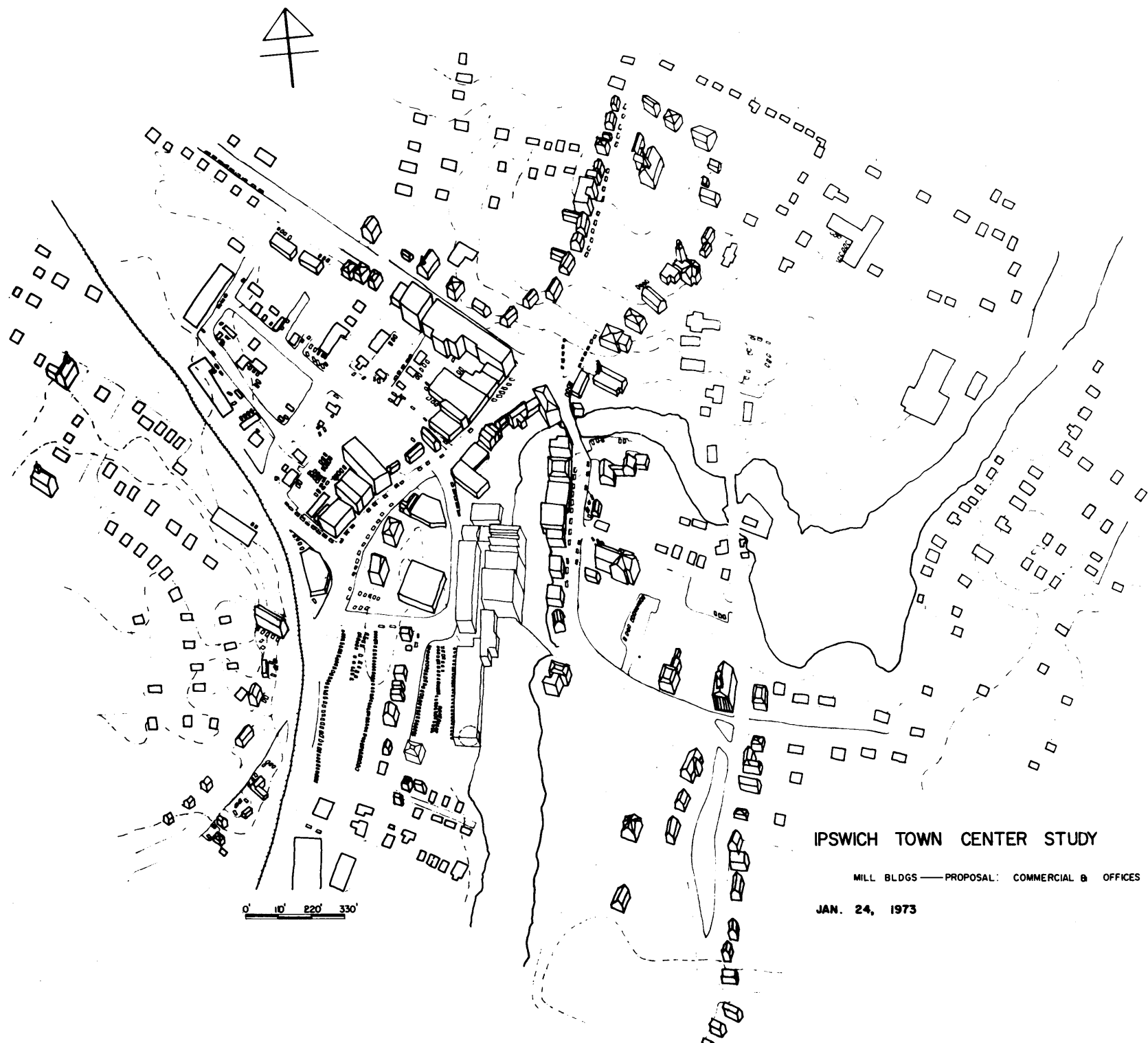
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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

MILL BLDGS — PROPOSAL INDUSTRY & WAREHOUSE

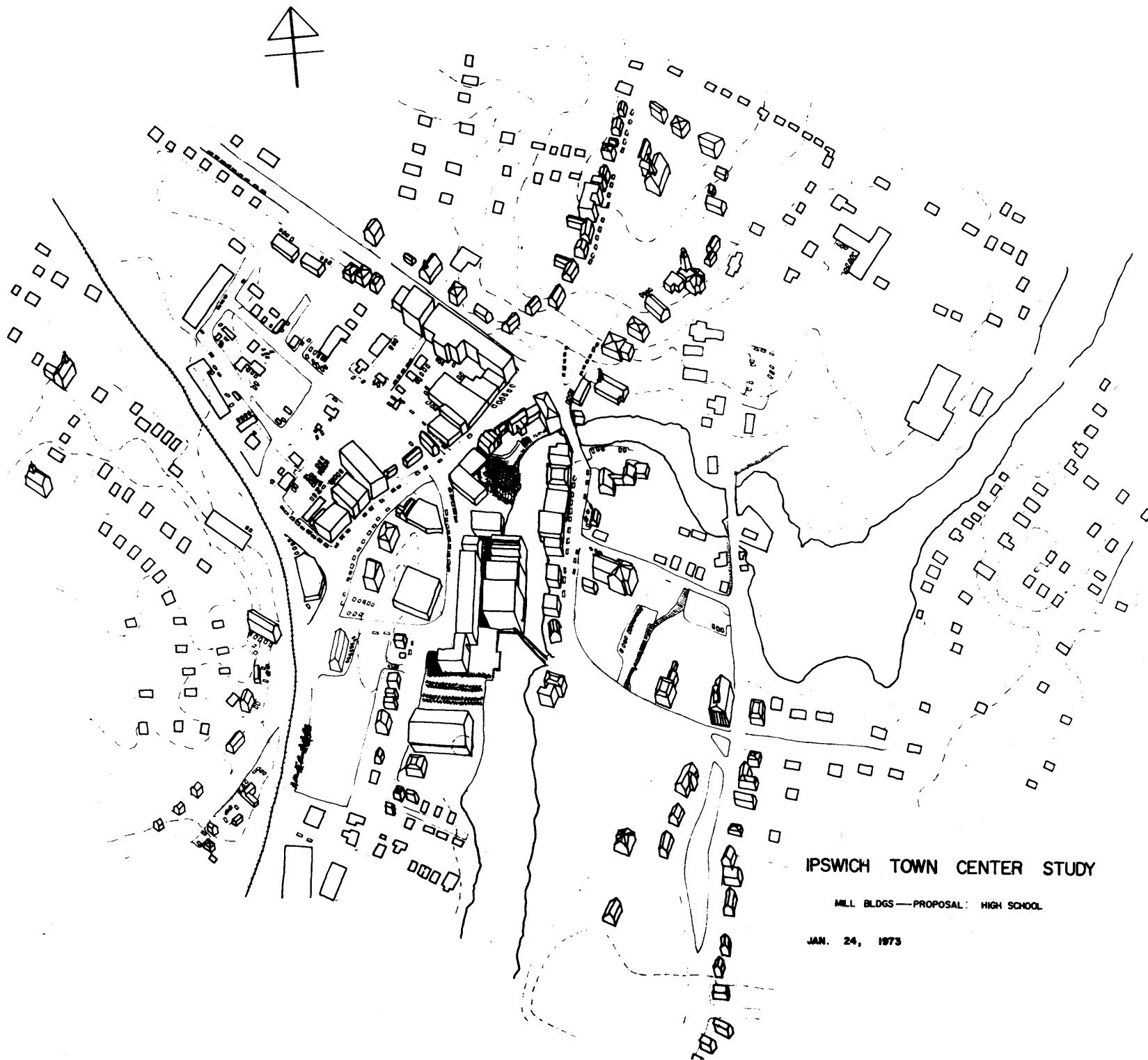
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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

MILL BLDGS — PROPOSAL: COMMERCIAL & OFFICES

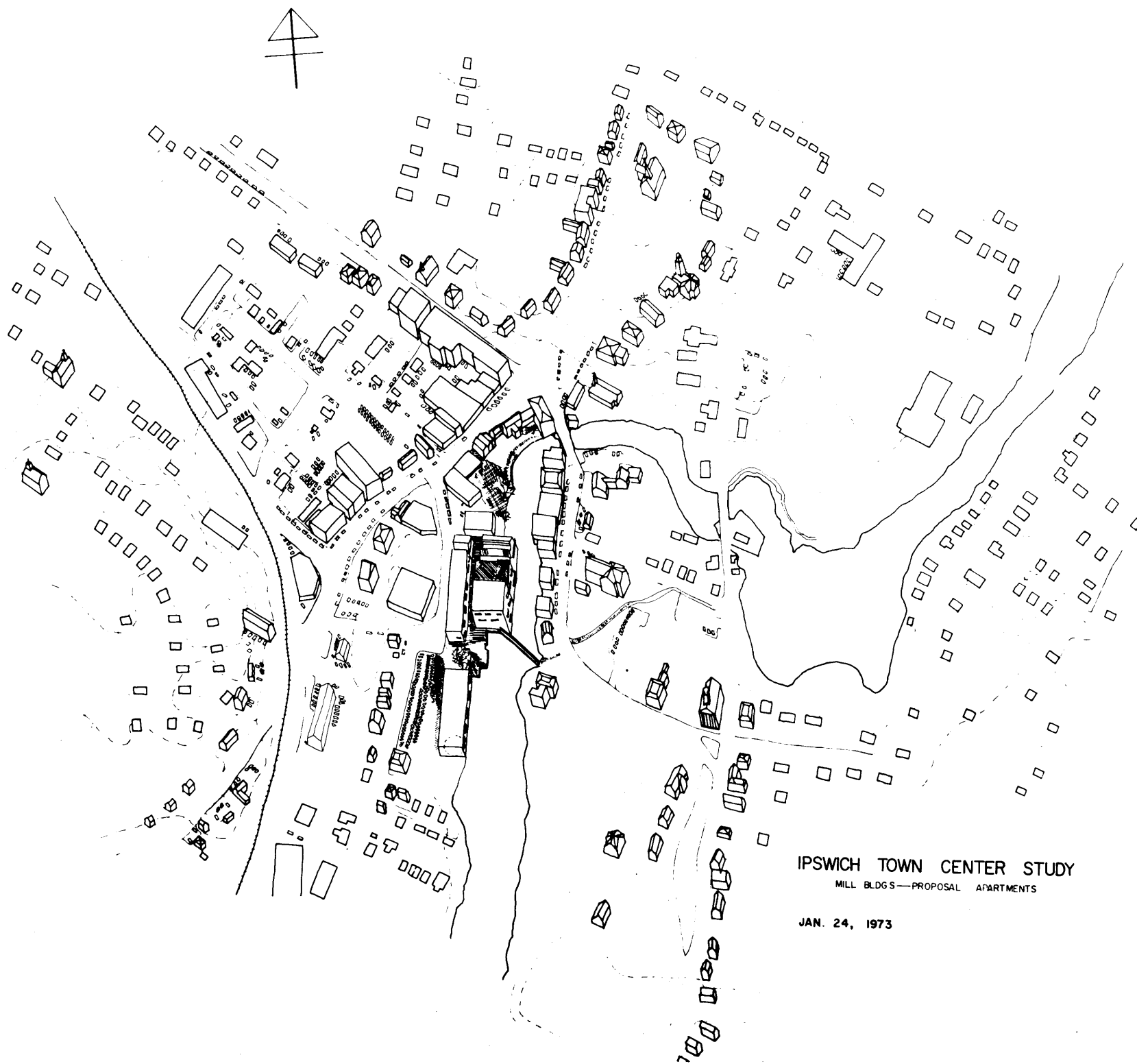
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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

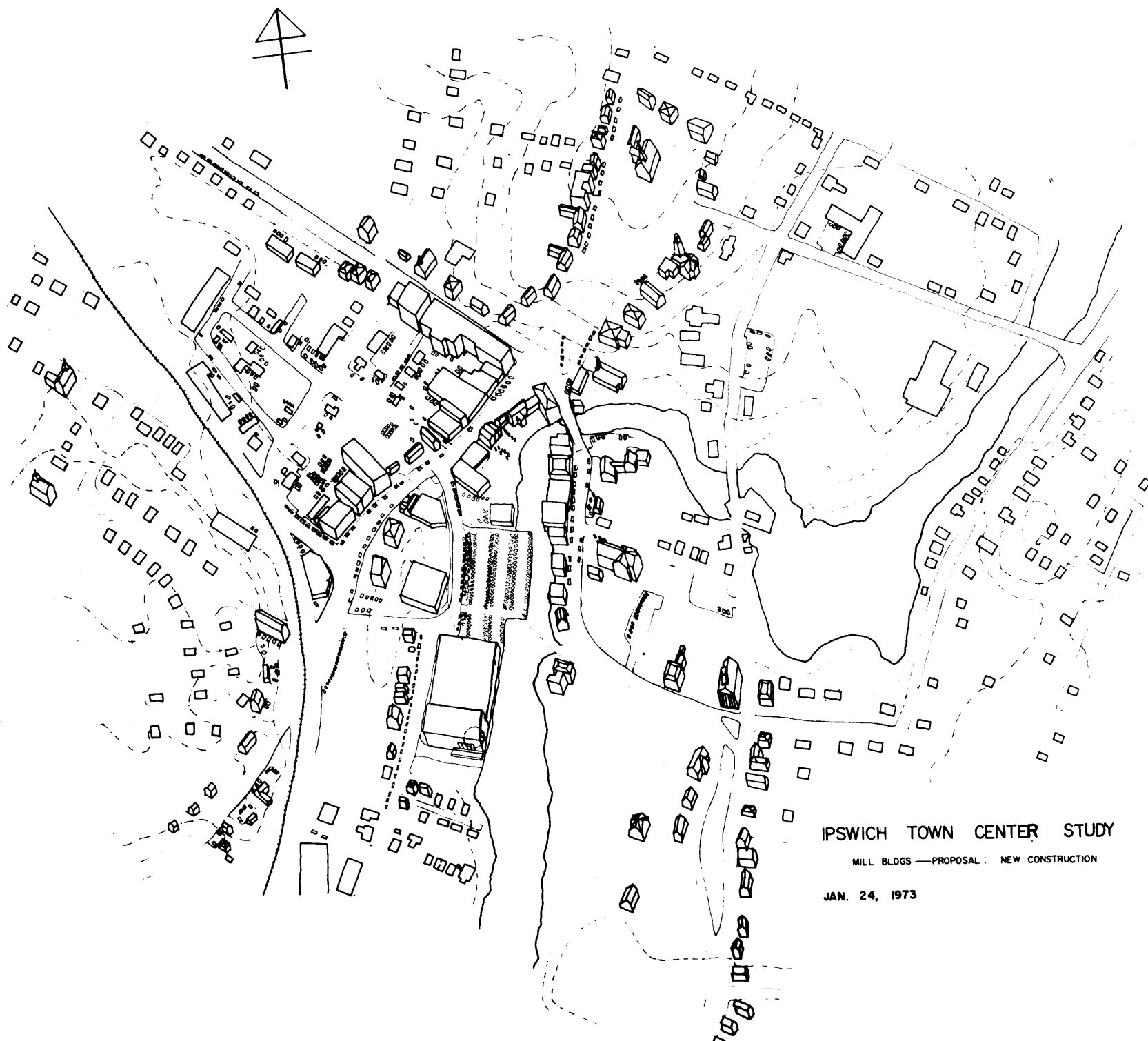
MILL BLDGS — PROPOSAL: HIGH SCHOOL

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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY
MILL BLDGS—PROPOSAL APARTMENTS

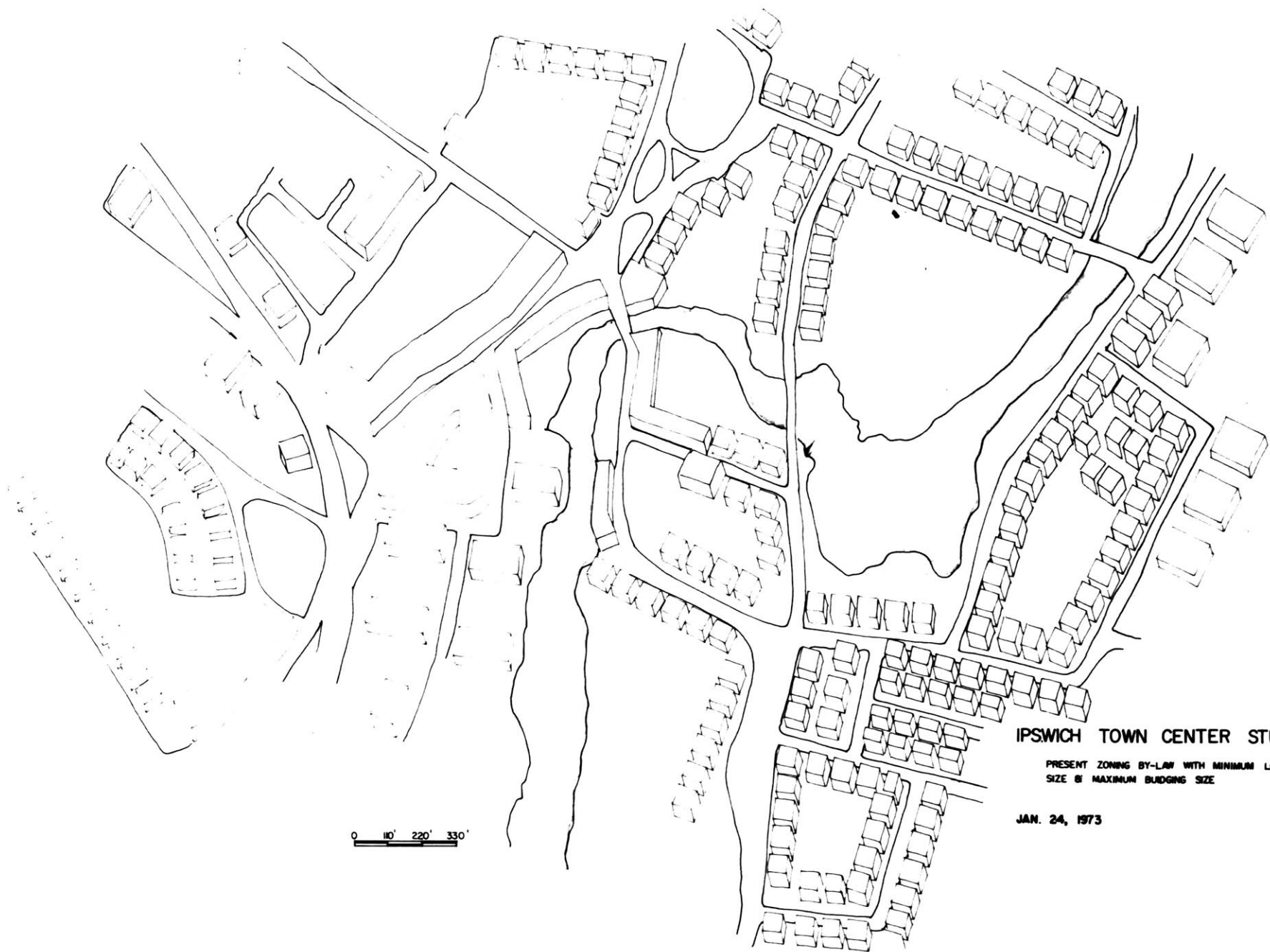
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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

MILL BLDGS — PROPOSAL : NEW CONSTRUCTION

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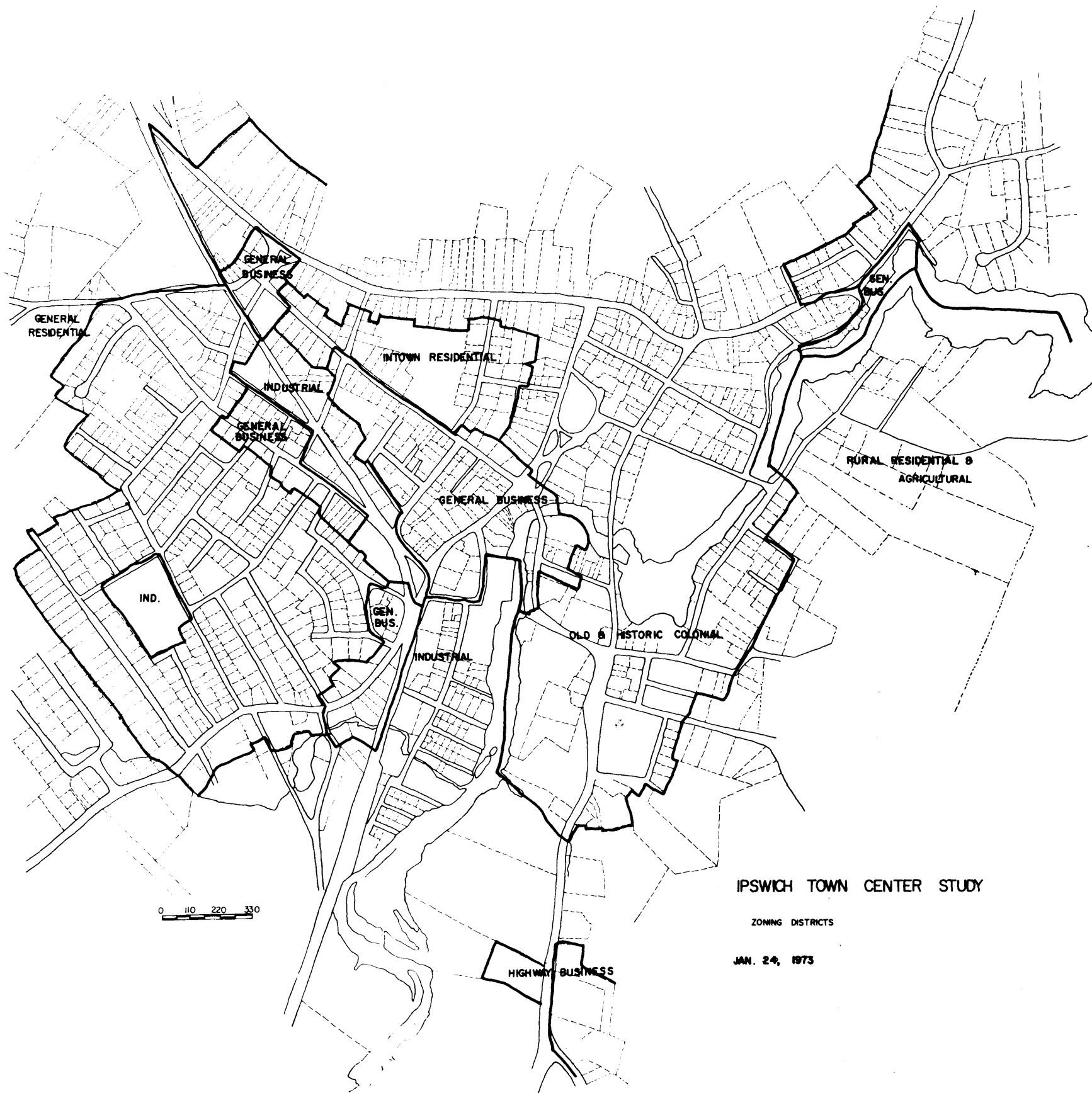


0 110' 220' 330'

IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

PRESENT ZONING BY-LAW WITH MINIMUM LOT
SIZE & MAXIMUM BUILDING SIZE

JAN. 24, 1973

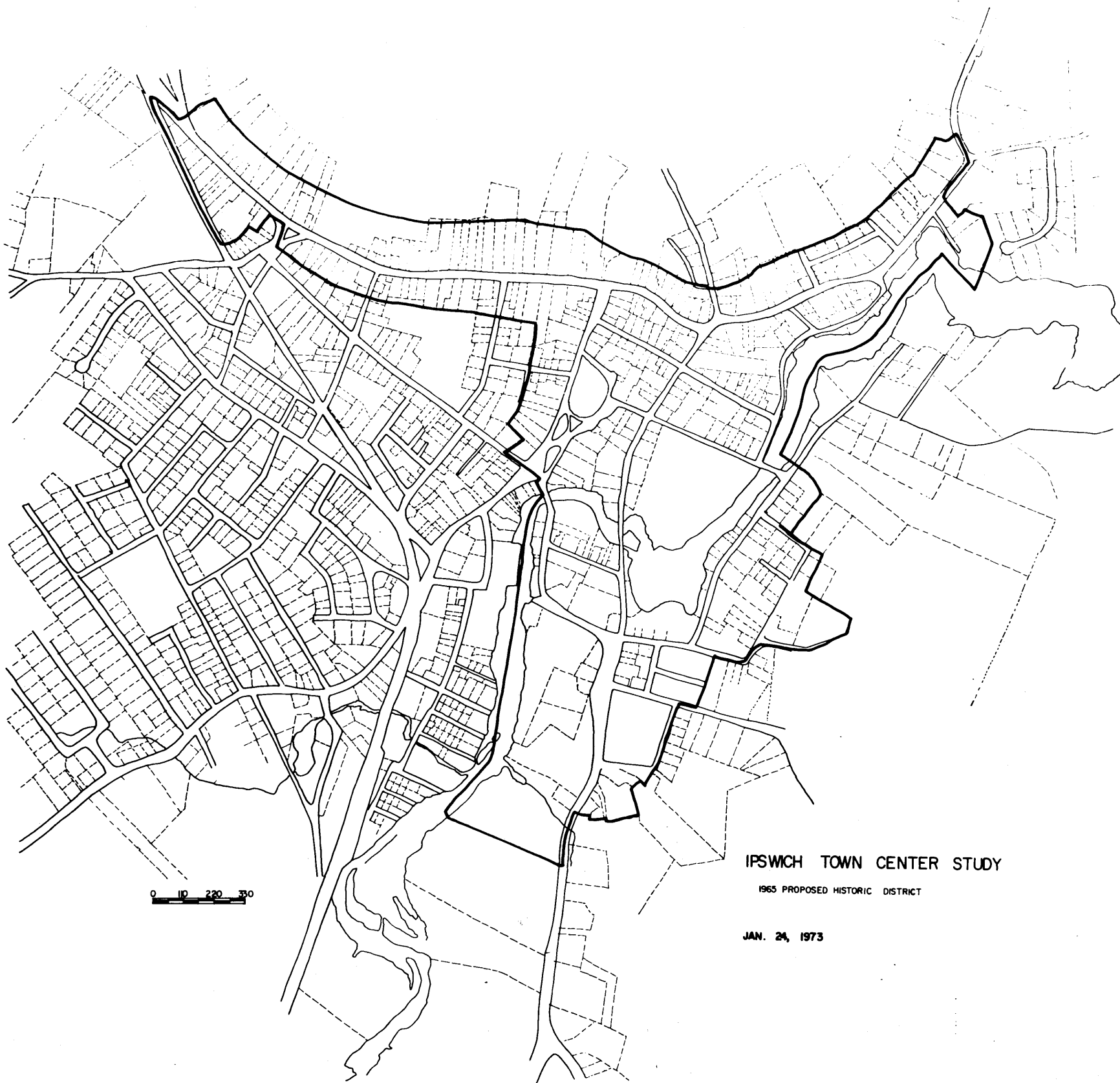


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IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

ZONING DISTRICTS

JAN. 24, 1973



0 10 20 30

IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

1965 PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT

JAN. 24, 1973



IPSWICH TOWN CENTER STUDY

PROPOSED ARCHITECTURAL DISTRICT

JAN. 24, 1973

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